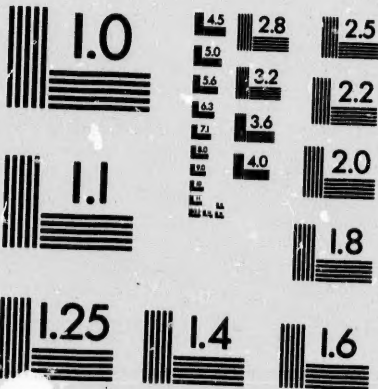


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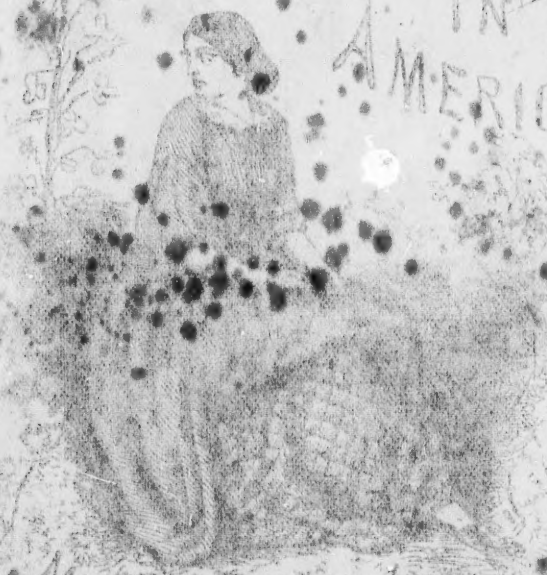




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MISS CONWAY  
THE IRISH GIRL  
IN  
AMERICA



BY  
MRS J. SADLIER

NEW YORK:  
D. & J. SADLIER & CO.



W. H. & C. S. L. CO. NEW YORK

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# BESSY CONWAY;

OR,

## THE IRISH GIRL IN AMERICA.

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE CONFEDERATE CHIEFTAINS," "BLAKES & FLANAGANS,"  
"NEW LIGHTS," "ELINOR PRESTON," "WILLY BURKE,"  
AC., &C., &C

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## PREFACE.

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It seems to me that there is little need of a Preface for BESSY CONWAY. The object of the book is plain enough ; so plain, indeed, that there is no possibility of any one's mistaking it for a better or a worse. It is simply an attempt to point out to *Irish Girls in America*—especially that numerous class whose lot it is to hire themselves out for work, the true and never-failing path to success in this world, and happiness in the next. Perhaps in the vast extent of the civilized world, there is no class more exposed to evil influences than the Irish Catholic girls who earn a precarious living at service in America. To those who are even superficially acquainted with the workings of that chaotic mass which forms the population of our cities, of the awful depth of corruption weltering below the surface, and the utter forgetfulness of things spiritual, it is a matter of surprise that so many of the simple-hearted peasant girls of Ireland retain their home-virtues and follow the teachings of religion in these great Babylons of the west.

The subject looms up before us in tremendous proportions as we come to consider it, and the mind shrinks appalled from the consequences and probabilities presenting themselves on every side. The vast number of these girls, their unprotected state, generally speaking ;

the dangers of every kind awaiting them after they have slipped the moorings which bound them in safety to the old Christian land, where virtue and religion are the basis of society; and, unfortunately, the mischief is not confined to themselves. Every woman has a mission, either for good or evil; and, unhappily for society, the lax, and the foolish, and the unprincipled will find husbands as well as the good and virtuous. The sphere of influence thus extended, who can calculate the results, whether good or ill?

Some may say that I have drawn too gloomy a picture. Such persons know little about it. The reality exceeds my powers of description, and I have only to say in conclusion, that the fathers and mothers who suffer their young daughters to come out unprotected to America in search of *imaginary* goods, would rather see them laid in their graves than lose sight of them, did they know the dangers which beset their path in the New World.

I have written this book from a sincere and heartfelt desire to benefit these young country-women of mine, by showing them how to win respect and inspire confidence on the part of their employers, and at the same time, to avoid the snares and pitfalls which have been the ruin of so many of their own class. Let them be assured that it rests with themselves whether they do well or ill in America—whether they do honor to their country and their faith, or bring shame and reproach to both.

NEW YORK *June*, 1861.

# BESSY CONWAY;

OR,

## THE IRISH GIRL IN AMERICA.

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### CHAPTER I.

IN the heart of the rich and fertile county of Tipperary, not far from the banks of the silvery Suir, and almost in the shadow of the mouldering castle of Ardfinnan, there is a snug and comfortable farm-house owned by one Denis Conway, as decent a man, so the neighbors say, as you would find in the five counties. Denis is what you may call a "sponsible farmer," he holds some fifty acres of as good ground as any in Tipperary, and that at an easy rent, so easy, indeed, that Denis is putting by something every year for the "rainy day." No wonder that he should, when he can, for he has lived through the darkest and most dismal of "rainy days," when gaunt famine stared in at the door and pestilence at the window; when a shilling was worth a precious life, and a pound of meal its weight in gold, because of the hunger that was gnawing at the people's hearts, and Denis Conway had seen all that, and, moreover, he had lost his farm and his dwelling in that dreary time, and was turned out with his family to seek shelter where they could find it, all because he could not pay his rent, then fearfully in arrear. So even as a *burnt child* is said to dread the fire, Denis had a salutary fear of being again penniless, and now that God had given him back the blessing of prosperity,

he made up his mind not to let *all* its golden fruit slip through his fingers to leave him again with empty hands should the day of trial come.

Happily the dark days of famine and pestilence had passed away without leaving Denis Conway any worse legacy than that of experience. Unlike many of his friends and neighbors he had seen no one belonging to him die the awful death of hunger—reduced to the last necessity as they had been, and for whole days without eating a morsel, still it so happened that relief always came at the right time, justifying the word that was always on the old man's lips: "God is a good provider." Surely Denis found Him so, and his cheerful and patient reliance on Divine Providence was well rewarded. How else could he and his have lived when so many died, and, still more remarkable, how else could they have got back into the old homestead and renovate it so that it looked as good as new, ay! and a great deal better? How came the horse in the stable, and the cows in the byre back again, and the hay, and the oats, and the wheat "stacked up" as of old in the haggard at the end of the house? What but that bountiful Providence in which Denis had trusted all along, even when things looked darkest.

But how did Providence bring all this about? I hear some of my readers ask, and that is just what I am going to tell. Visible agents are always employed to carry out the divine economy in regard to human affairs. Now who was Denis Conway's Providence? whose hand was employed to draw him and his family from the abyss of wretchedness in which the whole country was engulfed? Who but his own daughter Bessy, the eldest of his children who had gone to America years before, in the service of a captain's lady who had taken a fancy to the girl in Carrick, where she was serving her time to a dressmaker.

It was the first grief that had come upon the family when Bessy persisted in accepting the tempting offer which would

enable her to "see the world." For years long that had been the dream of her young heart, ay! ever since the days of her childhood, and although she would not positively disobey her parents, and go without their consent, she gave them plainly to understand that she would never be happy unless they gave it, and under that pressure the old couple were forced to give in. Very unwillingly they did so. The world was smiling on them at the time, they were contented and happy themselves, and they could not sympathize with the love of change which had unsettled their daughter's mind. If it had been Nancy, now, or Nelly, or one of the boys that took such a wild notion into their heads, "a body wouldn't wonder," the old mother said, "but Bessy that was ever and always a rock of sense, and the best child that ever drew breath, she to think of leaving them in their old age, and turn her back on all belonging to her—that was something so far beyond the range of probability that they could hardly believe it at all, and only awoke from their stupor of surprise to find Bessy prepared "for the start," and themselves expected to go with the rest of the convoy on the following day to Waterford to see her and some neighbor boys and girls off for America. So Denis and Bridget had only to make the best of it and see that Bessy should want for nothing on her long and tedious voyage, which appeared to their simple minds as an undertaking of awful importance, fraught with danger of every kind, probable and improbable. Finding that her mistress had provided her with almost everything necessary for the voyage, and had, moreover, paid her passage, all her parents could do was to give her the money intended for her outfit and passage, with a trifle to the back of it, too, so that poor Bessy might have something to draw on if things went against her in the strange country for which she was bound.

It was a sorrowful parting between Bessy Conway and her father and mother, and brothers and sisters, who had hitherto been her world. It was to her something like launching into

(the regions of air far beyond mortal ken, and as she sobbed out her last farewell on her mother's shoulder, she thought she could not live so far away from home, and friends, and parents. And yet their parting was not so heart-rending as many others they saw around them. It was brightened by hope, cheering hope, for Bessy had a good home to come back to, in case she did not like America, and she went with the special condition that, in any case, she would return in the course of a few years, if God spared her life. Besides, she was not wholly amongst strangers: had she not Peery Murphy and his family from the very door with her, and the Murphy girls had been her "comrades" as long as she could remember? Then there was a first cousin of her father's, Ned Finigan by name, as steady and as decent a man as there was in the parish he came from. Ned was verging on old bachelorship, and had "neither chick nor child," and he cheerfully promised Denis Conway (and why wouldn't he, wasn't he his own aunt's son?) that Bessy should never want a friend, or one to advise her, as long as he was in the land of the living. What could go beyond that? Denis asked in a tone of entire satisfaction, and his wife nodded approvingly. So what with Peery Murphy's people and Ned Finigan, not to speak of Mrs. Walters, her kind mistress, who promised so fair, there was little fear of Bessy but she'd do well. So every one said, and, of course, what every one says must be true. Still it was with a heavy heart and tearful eyes that those left behind stood watching the steamer that bore away Bessy, as it splashed and sputtered from the wharf. Away and away she goes, the wharf is cleared, loud from the shore rises the parting cry of sorrow from the crowd of friends and relatives, back from the boat the echo comes, a sad, wild chorus, in which many voices mingle. Messages to friends in America are for the last time called out to those on board, injunctions to write as soon as they landed, and all the late last words with which affection seeks to prolong the intercourse that will soon cease, perhaps forever.

"If you go to the New Orleans, Peter, don't forget to call and see Lucy!"

"Mind what I tell you, Terence, about that man in Halifax—be sure to find him out for me." Terence promised, for the twentieth time perhaps, wholly unmindful, as was his friend, of the trifling difficulty that *his* destination was Philadelphia—no matter, anyhow, Halifax and Philadelphia were both in America, that was enough to know; the rest was easy.

"Tell Mark and Mary I'll be with them in the Spring, please God!"

"Let Patrick know that we lost the hill farm!"

"Tell my uncle that we never got a scroll from Biddy since she went to Boston!"

Promises came back over the water from a multitude of eager voices, hands and hats and many-colored handkerchiefs were waved, fervent prayers and wishes were exchanged, eyes were strained to distinguish the faces of near and dear ones, faint and fainter came the wailing voices to ears that listened for their latest sound, the haze of distance gradually blended into one the distinctive features of the crowd on deck and the crowd on shore, yet hands and hats were still seen waving the last farewell; soon even these were lost sight of, the waters rolled between the nearest and dearest, and the steamer was ploughing through Waterford harbor on her way to Liverpool.

Denis Conway and his family retraced their homeward steps not in silence, but in sorrow,—scarcely, if, at all, lessened by the number of their neighbors similarly afflicted. They felt at the moment as if they had left Bessy in the churchyard clay, and the lightest heart among them was weighed down with sorrow. None of them could realize to themselves that they should ever see her face again, her promise to the contrary notwithstanding, and when any of the neighbors reminded them of it, the old couple shook their heads dolefully and said: "God grant she may! but America's a long way off."

"But, never mind, Bridget astore!" said Denis with an attempt at cheerfulness, "you know what you said to Bessy there awhile ago: 'God will never desert *them* that don't desert *Him*.' Keep that in mind, *machree*! and don't fret about the gersha—she's in good hands we *all* know."

So thought Bessy herself as she stood on the deck of the steamer and looked back with tearful eyes towards the spot where she had seen her loved ones for the last time. The noble quay of Waterford was before her, and the bright mel-low sun of September was gilding the hoary towers which Danes and Normans built in ages long gone by, yet Bessy Conway heeded them not, little she knew and little she cared for the memories that hung around those venerable relics of the past. The splendid erections of modern art were equally unnoticed by the sorrowing girl; not even the softly-undulating hills around the city or the blue mountains in the distance gave her a moment's pleasure as her listless eye fell on them. Poor Bessy Conway was too much engrossed by the one sad thought that she was leaving, perhaps for ever, all she loved on earth, to pay any attention to things beyond the measure of her own loss. She was passing scenes of old renown, where Danish princes ruled and the proud Plantagenets kept their court, where Strongbow wedded the reluctant daughter of McMurrough, and Cromwell left his Vandal-mark on the sacred monuments of art, and where James II. took his last farewell of Ireland—what a world of ancient lore crowded into the annals of one city, yet all unknown to Bessy. She was thinking of the cottage beneath the sycamore, miles and miles away, and wondering if her favorite "crummy" would let Nelly or Nancy milk her that evening, or which of the girls would make her father's "posset"\* at bed-time. Her thoughts were homely and of home, taking in all the scenes that sur-

\* All our readers may not know that a *posset* means a warm drink made of sweet and sour milk which together form *whey*.



rounded her paternal dwelling, ay! even to the lone bush in the pasture-field which had been the terror of her childish days.

Bessy was roused from her sorrowful musing by the voice of her mistress, who had come in search of her. She had wholly forgotten the new state into which she had entered, and it was with a feeling of pleasure that she now prepared to commence the discharge of her duty, hoping to find relief in occupation. She therefore followed Mrs. Walters to the cabin with a buoyant step and a somewhat lighter heart. More than one friendly voice hailed her as she passed, and Mary Murphy, Peery's youngest daughter, caught her arm with a girlish laugh.

"Take your time, Bessy, there's luck in leisure!"

"I can't stop now, Mary dear; don't you see the mistress wants me?"

Mary laughed again as she turned to her eldest sister: "See what it is to be a cabin passenger! we're puttin' airs on us already!"

Bessy only answered by a reproachful glance, and passed on, but Ally Murphy rebuked her sister and told her she saw no airs on Bessy. "You see she's not her own mistress now," said the sedate maiden, who was verging on the sober age of thirty, "it isn't old times with her, Mary, and she does well to start fair, for, you know, a good beginnin' makes a good endin'."

"God mark you with grace, *a colleen*," said an ancient dame who was sitting on a very small wooden box that contained her goods and chattels, "it's you that has the purty, graceful way with you, and the good word in your mouth! Some way my heart warms to you, an' its the same with the fair-haired colleen that's gone in there. Is she anything to you, *machree*?"

"Not a drop's blood, granny, only the good wish that's between us—we came from the same place, and she's an old comrade of mine."

"See that now, and would you be pleased to tell me what part of America you're bound for?"

"New York. Is it there *you're* goin'?"

"Wisha, then, myself doesn't know *where* I'm goin' to. There's a boy of mine somewheres in America, and I'm just goin' to try and make him out. I haven't a soul in the world but him, you see, an' I didn't get e'er a word from him this two years come Candlemas. I think my old heart would grow young again if I only had a sight of him, so I sold my little place—a house and garden I had—and thank God! I got enough for it to bring me out."

"Well, but, granny," said the sympathizing Ally, as she sat down by the old woman, "sure you don't know whether your son's livin' or dead when you didn't hear from him these two years?"

"Livin' or dead!" repeated the dame sharply, "why what would kill him? Don't I know very well he's livin'? why wouldn't he? An' I'll find him out, too, with the help of God, before long! The last letter I had from him was in a place they call Hi-o, or O-hio, I dont know which, but I suppose it is not very far from New York. Did you ever hear of such a place?"

"Well, no, granny, I did not, but, as you say, it can't be very far from New York."

"Only a matter of six or eight hundred miles, or so," said a gentlemanly man with a sun-burned face who had been an amused and interested listener to this colloquy.

"Six or eight hundred miles!" screamed the old woman in blank despair, "Christ save us! your honor's not in earnest!"

"I am, indeed, my good woman, very much in earnest, as you will find to your cost unless you have some money by you."

"Six or eight hundred miles!" repeated the old woman as if to herself, "why, if it's that, I'll never be able to *get* there. How long would it take a body to go, please your honor?"

"Four or five days, I fancy."\*

"Oh! wisha, if that's all," and the old woman brightened up at once, "it's not so bad as I thought, an I'll be able to reach Philip after all."

"The mistress wants you, sir!" said Bessy Conway emerging from the cabin and addressing the gentleman.

When he was gone, Ally Murphy asked Bessy if that was her master.

"To be sure—that is Captain Walters. He's agoin' to his own ship that's at Liverpool, an' it's in *her* we're all goin' to America."

"That I mayn't sin, but he's a nice, fair-spoken gentleman," said the old woman, whose name was Dolly Sheehan, "an' he seems to know all about America. Do you think was he ever in it before?"

"Why, God help your wit, granny, doesn't he go back and forth between it and Liverpool a good many times every year of his life! Know America! eh then, its himself that does!"

"Well, now, I'm sorry I didn't ask him if he ever heard of one Philip Sheehan. Maybe *you'd* ask him the question, *ma colleen bawn*?" addressing Bessy.

"I'll get the mistress to ask him—I'd be a little daunted myself to make so free, an' me only a stranger. But where's all the rest of them, Ally? I thought they were here with you."

"It's a'most time for you to ask," said Mary, taking the word of her sister's mouth. "There they are, if you want to know," and she pointed to a group at a little distance, the central figure of which was a comical looking individual with a hump on his back, who was talking and gesticulating with an air half quizzical, half serious. He had been to America before, it would seem, and was entertaining his eager listeners with an account of what he had seen there. The wondering

\* Three-and-twenty years ago travelling was not so rapid as it is now.

exclamations of those around him gradually attracted others from the gloomy contemplation of their native shores, and soon the audience comprised all within hearing, except a few whose load of sorrow was too heavy and painful to permit of any diversion. Peery Murphy and his wife were amongst the hunchback's first auditors, and Ned Finigan sat with his long legs dangling from the top of a pile of boxes in the immediate vicinity, listening intently, yet half doubtingly, to the veracious evidence of the little man.

"And you say they don't have to walk much in America?" said an old man who stood by leaning on his staff.

"I tell you they hardly walk at all," replied the travelled hunchback, whose name was Paul. "They ride about hither and thither in fine coaches with velvet cushions, as complete as you please. They go everywhere in a coach—bedad they do, even to their work and from it. If a man wants to see another five or six miles away on business, or ask him a question, he has nothing to do but step in and ride to the very door, and when he wants to get out he has only to pull a leather strap that runs through the coach from the driver's seat, and, my dear, it's stopped immediately, as if he was the lord of the land. If a boy's goin' home with a new coat, or a pair of breeches, or anything that way, or a woman with a basket of fish, why, they just step into the coach, and they're taken to the place in no time."

"Well, now! isn't it great respect they show the people?" ejaculated one. "The Lord be praised! isn't it the fine country all out!" cried another. "And the gover'ment has them elegant coaches just to save the people from walkin'?" This last speaker was Ned Finigan, from his elevated perch.

"Well, no; not the gover'ment, but the President—it's the President does it." And Paul fixed his eyes on his audience with a peculiarly knowing look.

"The President, who is he?"

"Oh, bedad! he's a fine old gentleman they have got there coinin' money for them. That's *his* business, and he's at it hard and fast from one year's end to the other. He's at the head and foot of everything that's goin' on, an', as I told you before, it's him that has the coaches an' everything commodious just waitin' for you and me. All the people call him Uncle Sam, and they go now and then to visit him where he's sittin' in state in a fine grand house at a place they call Washington."

"And can any one that likes get in to see him where he makes the money?"

"Deed an' they can, and put their *comether* on him, too. He's not a bit proud. Didn't I shake hands with him once myself."

"Shake hands with the President!"—"with the ould gentleman that makes the money!" "And what did he say, honest man?"—"what does he look like, at all?"—"I'm sure he was ever so grand!"

"Grand! why, God help your wit, you could hardly look at him for the goold and silver—he'd dazzle your eyes!"

"Maybe he's a sort of a conjurer," put in old Dolly Sheehan, who had succeeded after much trouble in making her way through the crowd. "If he wasn't he'd never be able to coin all the money that's in America. It's like he might tell me where I'd find Philip."

"Philip who?" asked the hunchback quickly and earnestly. There was something in the name that struck a chord in his heart, or, at least, in his memory.

"Why, Philip Sheehan, to be sure—that's *my* son that's in America!"

"And *you're* Philip Sheehan's mother?" questioned Paul, with a sudden change of manner, and he fixed his keen, bright eyes on the wrinkled face before him.

"The sorra one else I am, my good man!—maybe you know Philip yourself!"

"Well! I *did* know a Philip Sheehan once——

"You did! The Lord's blessin' on you, then, and tell me where he is!"

The hunchback shook his head. "I wish I could, granny! but, sure, maybe it wasn't *your* son at all. The one I mean was a waiter in a hotel——"

"That's him—that's him!" cried the old woman joyfully, and she caught hold of Paul's hand, and held it fast, as if any one that had seen her son was the next best thing to himself, and to be prized accordingly. "Sure, that's just what he was at in the last letter I got from him. But where—where is he now? If you know, God bless you and tell me, an' you'll be doin' an act of charity, for he's all I have in the world, an' I don't know where to face to after him."

Was there a tear in the hunchback's eye, but late so full of fun? There was, and his dark sallow cheek turned pale, but he pretended to look another way and avoided the old woman's piercing glance. He forced a laugh, too, and tried to shake off the withered hand that was on his arm, but he tried in vain, the hand would not stir.

"Hut, tut, granny! let me go! I was only making fun! What should I know about your son?"

"I tell you, man! you *do* know!" screamed the crone with sudden vehemence, "I see it in your face, and I'll never let go of you—never—never—till you tell me!" She put her old wisened face almost close to his, and peered into his eyes, as if she could read the secret there. "Tell me now, like a decent man—where is Philip Sheehan—*my* boy Philip?"

"I tell you I don't know!" said he doggedly.

"I tell you, you do—you *do*! an' I must know, too!"

"You're an unmannerly woman, so you are——"

"I'm Philip Sheehan's mother—d'ye hear that—an' I see you know where he is, but you're playin' tricks on me—don't blame me, agra!—don't blame me,—don't be angry with me for askin'—sure he's all I have, an' I sold my little place to go

to him, but where's the use if I don't know where to find him!"

The tears were streaming from the old woman's eyes, and indeed there were few dry eyes around. No one was more moved than the queer little hunchback.

"Well! now, granny, I'll jist tell you the truth," said he, "I *did* know your son when I was out here before, but—but—how can I tell where he is now—I'm home ever since Lammas was a year—sure unless I was a conjurer, or a fairy-doctor, I couldn't tell what became of him since?"

There was no going beyond this, so the old woman dropped his hand and turned away with a heavy sigh.

"God pity you, poor woman!" muttered the hunchback to himself as he watched her receding form, bowed down with age and sorrow.

"Is the boy livin' or dead, dear?" questioned one of the bystanders, a good-looking elderly woman in a blue cloak, who had been paying particular attention all along.

"What would you give to know, dear?" retorted Paul so quickly, and with such a droll grimace that a roar of laughter followed, and the woman in the blue cloak slunk away all abashed.

Bessy Conway had been an attentive and deeply-interested witness of this scene, and she was hastening after the disconsolate mother of Philip Sheehan to offer some words of comfort and encouragement, when a voice spoke at her ear.

"Not a word or a look for *me*, Bessy?"

The girl raised her eyes with a start and a blush, and met the reproachful glance of a good-looking young man, whose dress and general deportment were considerably above the peasant class to which most of the emigrants belonged. There was a smart, knowing look about him which savored of the town rather than the country, and his words were smooth and well-placed.

"Why, then, Mister Henry, is it here *you* are? what in the world brings you?"

"What in the world would bring me?—what a wonder you make of it to see me!"

"But who ever thought of seeing you *here*? Are you going to America, or what?"

"I'm going wherever *you* go."

"Lord bless me, sir! what a thing for you to say!" exclaimed Bessy, in real alarm. "Sure, your father and mother would never hear of your going to America, or anywhere else, away from *them*! And you that has such a good America at home! Oh, master Henry! think of what you're about!"

"I know what I'm about," replied the young man sharply. "And I'd have *you* to know, Miss Bessy Conway, that I'm too old now to be tied to my mother's apron strings. As soon as I heard you were going to America I made up my mind to go, too, but you may be sure I kept my mind to myself. If I had made it known to any one, it was no go."

"Well, but, what do you mean, Master Henry? what do you mean, at all, at all? I'm sure I got blame enough at home on your account, an I'll be ruined entirely if you be comin' after me in America."

"Why, really, Bessy, it is amusing to hear you talk—one would think it was you was above, and I below!—ruined indeed, how can you be ruined when I'm willing to marry you as soon as you like?"

"Never, Master Henry, never," cried Bessy with an energy little to be expected from her usually quiet demeanor, "I'll never marry a man at home or abroad that is not pleasin' to my parents!"

"You won't, Bessy?"

"No, sir, *never*! so you may as well give it up, an' look after somebody that will answer you better."

"Suppose I take you at your word—what then?" demanded



Henry, with a peculiar smile that made Bessy Conway's cheek scarlet.

"For God's sake, do!" she said fervently, clasping her hands as she spoke. "Do, sa. en' you'll have my blessing! Go! go! —go now! there's the mistress! I wouldn't for the world she'd see us together!"

She hurried away obedient to a sign from Mrs. Walters, leaving the young man to digest what she had said as best he might. He was standing looking after Bessy with a mingled expression of anger and admiration on his fine open countenance, when a hand was laid on his arm, and turning quickly he encountered the upturned face of the hunchback.

## CHAPTER II.

"HENRY HERBERT! a word with you!" said the little man, raising himself on tiptoe.

"A word with *me*!—what is it, and how do you know my name?"

"No matter to you how I know it, but listen to what I'm agoing to tell you!"

Herbert stooped almost mechanically, and the dwarf whispered in his ear:

"Let that girl alone, or you'll be sorry!"

"And who are you?" asked the young man haughtily, and, drawing himself up, he looked down with infinite contempt on the hunchback, "who are you that make free to tell me so? To my knowledge I never laid eyes on you before!"

"That's neither here nor there—mind what I tell you, or you'll rue it the longest day you have to live!—do you hear me now?"

Herbert was about to reply in a scoffing and contemptuous tone, but the little man raised his finger menacingly, and there was something in his look that the other did not care to provoke farther. He would fain make a joke of the whole affair, and tried hard to force a laugh.

"Well! well! my little fellow! no need for us to quarrel! I see you're a lad!"

"I've my eyes open, anyhow!—remember that, Henry Herbert!—a good day to you, sir!" and the dwarf took off his glazed leather cap, and made quite a polite bow and then walked away with the air of a tragedy hero.

The young man stood eyeing him a moment with a look half curious, half malicious, then humming to himself "The Rakes of Mallow" he sauntered away through the crowd, looking as unconcerned as though nothing had occurred to ruffle his temper.

"Bessy!" said Mrs. Walters, whilst her young attendant assisted at her toilet, "who is the young man to whom I saw you speaking just now?"

Bessy's heart sank within her as she replied, or endeavored to reply: "He's our landlord's son, ma'am, Master Henry Herbert, from near Ardfinnan, ma'am!—his father isn't the head landlord, but it's to him we pay our rent—he has a long lease of the property."

"Yes, yes, but where did the family come from?—are they English or what?"

"Well, I b'lieve they are, ma'am, but they're a good many years in our neighborhood. The old gentleman and lady have ne'er a child but Master Henry."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Walters thoughtfully, and the slightest possible frown gathered on her fair brow, "Yes! they have but one *now*!—they had more once—ha! ha!—Bessy Conway! what brings this young fellow to America?—or is he going there?"

"He ~~says~~ he is, ma'am."

"Yes—but is wealthy, is he not?"

"Why, yes, ma'am! the people say in our place that he doesn't know the end of his own riches."

"It is not to make a living, then, that the son leaves home. What is he about, Bessy?" And the lady fixed her large blue eyes on the face of her attendant with a look that was meant to read her heart.

"What is he about, Mrs. Walters?" stammered Bessy with a most painful effort; "Lord bless me, ma'am dear! how can I tell *what* he's about?—sure I wouldn't make so free as to ask him the question!"

"Did you know he was going?"

"No more than you did, Mrs. Walters!—indeed, indeed, I didn't!" Bessy spoke these words with an earnestness and sincerity that was not to be doubted. She raised her head, too, and looked her mistress full in the face, and there was truth in her eyes though her cheek was suffused with blushes.

Mrs. Walters looked at her a moment fixedly, then heaved a sigh. "You are a good girl, Bessy!" she said after a moment's pause, "but you are young and inexperienced. Take my advice and have nothing more to say to this Herbert. I know the family. There is little good in them, depend on it——"

"Why, ma'am dear!" cried Bessy eagerly, "sure the whole country knows that. Nobody likes a bone in the ould man's body, and his lady is no great things either!"

"And the son?" demanded Mrs. Walters archly, with a side-long glance at Bessy.

"Well! I don't know much about *him*—he may be bad or good for me."

"I'm glad to hear it, Bessy," said Mrs. Walters with a half smile; "I hope you'll never know him any better than you do now. But what's the matter, girl?—sea-sick already?—you'd better go and lie down."

"Well, I b'lieve I will, ma'am, if it's pleasin' to you, for my head's so light I can hardly stand."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mrs. Walters, "that is only the beginning of it—you'll be worse before you're better, my poor Bessy!—I'm too old a sailor now to be sea-sick, but I had many a sore turn of it!—go, go, now—I see you're quite sick already."

Bessy was sick, and very sick, so much so that her kind mistress had to help her into her berth. "Now," said she, "I could give you something that would settle your stomach, but if you take my advice you will let nature take its course, for

a little suffering now may save you a great deal more hereafter in a strange climate."

"You know best, ma'am," said Bessy, making an effort to speak; "I'll do whatever you tell me."

"You are very bad, my poor girl," said the lady kindly, "but if it's any comfort for you to know it, I am sure you are no worse than most of the passengers by this time—we are now out in the Channel, and there is a heavy swell, so that the steamer heaves and plunges dreadfully—none but those who are, like myself, well accustomed to the sea, can escape seasickness at such a time."

"Oh, ma'am dear! if I only knew what it was to be this way," sobbed out Bessy, "I'd never—never have left home."

"I dare say," said Mrs. Walters with a smile, "but remember this will soon be over—by to-morrow's dawn we shall reach Liverpool, and, once on land, you'll soon forget the sea-sickness. I must leave you now—good night! and if you get any worse, just knock on the board at your head and I'll be with you."

"That Bessy Conway is a good girl," said Mrs. Walters to her husband that evening, "but I feel a little uneasy on her account."

"How is that?"

"Why, I find there is a young fellow on board who, I really think, has some design upon her. I saw them together in the first place, and, on questioning Bessy, I discovered, more from her manner and her looks than her words, that he has been making love to her."

"Well! and what then, Addie?" said the captain in his frank, abrupt way; "have not others made love before now, and what harm came of it?"

"Yes, yes, I know, it would be all right if the young man were of her own station——"

"Of her own station!—why, who the deuce is he?"

"You would hardly guess unless I told you. He is the son of Wilson Herbert——"

"What! he that swindled my father out of business in Birmingham so many years ago? You don't say so, Addie Walters!"

"But I do say so, William! because I know it for truth. The father took refuge in Ireland to evade the fury of his injured creditors, and with his ill-gotten wealth he purchased a long lease of a fine property in Tipperary which he holds at a merely nominal rent."

"I rejoice to hear it," said the captain with his English coolness; "I shall come on him one of these days when he least thinks it. He shall refund our share of his plunder if there's law in England."

"Of that hereafter, William!" said his wife with a meaning smile, for she knew that Walters, good easy man! would never take the trouble of prosecuting Herbert, "but the immediate question is to keep our little Bessy out of the way of the son."

"I'll break every bone in his body," said the phlegmatic captain, "if I hear of him making any advances to her."

"I don't want you to do *that*, either, William, so long as there are other means at our disposal. Indeed I would rather not have you interfere at all,—that is, unless it is absolutely necessary."

"Well! well! Addie," returned her husband with imperturbable good humor, "I know you women are fond of managing such matters—I will leave it to you, then, as you desire it, hoping that you will let me know when moral force fails in regard to this hang-dog Herbert, and I will try what physical force can do in the way of a good kicking."

"Agreed!" said the wife, "leave it to me—for the present, at least," and there the matter rested.

It required very little management on the part of Mrs. Walters to keep Bessy from seeing much of Herbert during the passage. Even in Liverpool where they had to wait some

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days, Bessy Conway was so constantly occupied in Mrs. Walters' room, that she found not a moment to see any of her fellow-passengers, though the Murphys and Ned Finigan lodged just round the corner from the hotel where Captain Walters and his wife were staying.

Mary Murphy was highly incensed at this supposed neglect on the part of Bessy. "I suppose she thinks herself mighty high in the world, because she happens to put up in a grand hotel—she wouldn't demean herself to come to see anybody in a lodging-house like this. Mary's brothers were of the same opinion, and indeed all the party, with the single exception of Ned Finigan and Ally Murphy. Ned took Bessy's part all through and would wager a trifle that it wasn't her fault.

"She's a first and second cousin of my own," said he, "and I know what's *in* her to the back-bone. It doesn't come with her to give the cold shoulder to her friends or neighbors—take *my* word for it, you're all blamin' her in the wrong."

"That's *my* notion, too, Ned!" observed Ally; "Bessy was always full of good nature and nobody livin' could make me believe that she left it all behind her at home."

"Well, then, I declare, Ally, you're a true-hearted, decent girl, and nothing else," said Ned Finigan with a look of admiration that set Ally's cheeks in a glow. "That I mayn't do an ill turn but you're a credit to them that owns you."

"We're entirely obliged to you, Mister Finigan," said Mrs. Murphy with a look of great complacency, for Ned was supposed to have a nice penny with him to America, having got something worth while for his good will of a farm he had had near Ardfinnan. "We're entirely obliged to you for your good opinion in regard to Ally. I'm her mother, and maybe I shouldn't say what I'm goin' to say, but it's all among friends, anyhow, so I will say it—you didn't say a word too much for Ally Murphy, for there she stands that never turned her tongue on father or mother, or never gave either of us a sore heart."

Ally attempted to laugh it off, saying "Hut, tut, mother! sure that's just the old story over again: 'Every crow thinks her own bird the whitest.'"

"It's you I b'lieve, Mrs. Murphy!" said Ned, regarding her daughter with increased admiration. Mary tittered in a corner and whispered to her youngest brother, "Hasn't he the fine taste entirely!" This was in allusion to her sister's rather plain exterior, unfavorably contrasted with her own pretty face and lithe girlish figure.

Somewhat embarrassed by Ned's steadfast gaze, Ally said, as much for the sake of saying something, as anything else: "Has anybody seen that poor old Dolly Sheehan since we got in?"

"Why, to be sure," replied her father, a good-natured, careless sort of man, who, as the saying is, took the world easy, "why, to be sure, Ally, isn't herself and that comical fellow with the hump lodgin' in the one house, somewheres near the water side. Ha! ha! ha! faith, I'm thinkin' that chap has his eyes open, anyhow! He heard the old woman tell that she had a son in America and that she sold a little place at home, and he thinks she has something by her—he sticks to her like a leech, you see!"

Every one laughed at Paul's preposterous expectations, and no one, not even Ally, dreamed of a higher and purer motive for Paul's attention to old Granny Sheehan.

The last day of our party's stay in Liverpool arrived, and Mrs. Walters remarked that Bessy came up stairs to her with a flushed cheek and a nervous excitement of manner very unusual with her. She was about to inquire what it meant, but seeing that the girl avoided her eye and kept away from her as much as possible, she thought it might be better to let it pass unnoticed. "Could it be possible," thought Mrs. Walters, "that she should have seen that fellow Herbert again after all my precautions? And yet, how could she—I have hardly let her out of my sight, and certainly not out of the



house since we have been here. It is very strange"—she mused—"very indeed!"

The mystery was solved when, on taking her seat at the hotel-table for dinner, Mrs. Walters observed Henry Herbert on the opposite side of the table apparently quite at his ease, and looking at her, moreover, with the coolest air of indifference and self-possession. On inquiry she learned that he had come to the house the day before.

"Now what am I to do, William?" said she to her husband the first time she had seen him after making the discovery.

"What's wrong now, Addie?"

"Why, that Herbert, to be sure—what do you think but I saw him at dinner here in the hotel—that fellow has the impudence of a certain individual whom I do not choose to name."

"What sort of a fellow is he?"

Mrs. Walters described him as well as she could, and the captain said: "All right! leave him to me!—come and bear a hand at strapping this trunk!—that's my girl——"

"Well but, William, what *can* we do to get rid of this Herbert?"

"Herbert be—hanged! I'll hear no more about him!" cried the captain, with more temper than he generally showed, "I'll tell you what, girl! if you want to get rid of *him*, send Bessy packing—that's the plan!"

"That won't do for me," replied the lady, "I expect to find Bessy a very useful servant, and I should be sorry to lose her so soon. Moreover, I have taken her from her home and friends, and I cannot but consider myself responsible to some extent for her welfare. Altogether, you see, William——"

"Altogether, you see, Addie! you have a good heart and a good head, which no one knows better than William Walters. But, as I told you before, just leave this gentleman to me—I'll look out for him, take my word for it!"

"Many thanks, William! I know you will when you say it.

But the safest way would be not to have him on board with us, at all. Do you think we could manage that?"

"It can't be done, Addie, can't be done!" and the captain shook his head; "it would never do for me to go to the office and direct the people there to refuse a passage-ticket to this one or that one. If the fellow has a mind to keep Bessy in view, be sure he has taken his passage already in the *Garrick*. But make your mind easy, little wife! you shall see if we don't keep Herbert at a civil distance, after all!"

His wife shook her head doubtingly, but she said no more on the subject.

That same evening, Mrs. Walters had occasion to send Bessy down stairs, and finding that she did not return as soon as she expected, she went out on the lobby, and looking over the bannister, saw the girl on a landing lower down in earnest conversation, as it appeared to her, with Henry Herbert. The angry blood rushed to the lady's cheek, and her confidence in Bessy was terribly shaken, if not altogether destroyed. There was no shadow of excuse now for this continued intercourse with Herbert, stealthy, too, and therefore the more disgraceful. She had, herself, warned her against him, and that but a day or two before, what confidence, then, was to be placed in a girl who could act as she did?

What was to be done? The idea of calling out on the staircase of a public house was repugnant to Mrs. Walters' punctilious notions of refinement, and to leave Bessy in such company was still worse. All at once, she perceived that Bessy had her foot on the step above, and was evidently anxious to go up, whilst Herbert laid hold of the hand that rested on the bannister, and talked earnestly and vehemently, through in suppressed accents. Bessy, on her part, grew quite excited, and her mistress smiled pleasantly as she said to herself: "I was not mistaken in her, after all; it is not so bad as I feared. I will go down myself," was her next thought, and she had reached the top of the stairs for that purpose, when

she discovered that a third person was added to the group below. It was Paul Brannigan who had stumped up from the hall, notwithstanding the determined opposition of an individual whose white jacket and apron bespoke his official capacity in the house. At first Paul would hardly vouchsafe him a word of explanation, but fearing that delay might defeat the object he had in view, he at length grumbled out:

"Bad manners to you, don't you see it's the boy and girl above there that I want a word with?" Then waited for no further parley but mounted as fast as his misshapen frame could propel itself.

"Who the mischief is that 'ere hump-backed fellow?" said the discomfited waiter to another who was passing at the moment. "If he a'n't gone up stairs in spite of me!"

"Let him go," said the other, "Captain Walters knows him. He sent me for him there awhile ago, and they had a talk in the bar-room. It's all right."

It was not all right for Henry Herbert when the hunchback laid his broad hand on his shoulder, and asked him what he was about.

Herbert started and changed color at the sound of his voice, then turning towards him though not very quickly, he tried to put it off with a laugh.

"You're a second Paul Pry," said he, "'pon honor you are! There's no such thing as escaping those two keen eyes of yours! Good-bye, Bessy! I'm glad to see you so well after crossing the herring-pond."

"Come along down here!" said Paul in such a tone of authority that Bessy involuntarily lingered to hear how the other would take it.

"What did I tell you on board the boat?" demanded Paul as the two descended the broad stairs side by side.

"I know well enough what you told me," replied Herbert in a low and very soothing voice, "but—but——"

"What brings you here, I say?"

"Why, don't be foolish, man? why wouldn't I be here as well as another?"

"I know well what brings you," said the hunchback looking up askance at the latter with the expression of a malignant elf; "I tell you, Herbert, you've no business here, and only we're to sail to-morrow, I'd have you look for lodging elsewhere."

"Well, really, my good fellow," said Herbert when they stood together on the tessellate floor of the hall, "well, really, this is too much. For a stranger, you make over free!"

"Do I, indeed? ha! ha! ha!—if you don't let Bessy Conway alone, this is little to what will come after. I know what's in you—ho! ho!—don't I, Henry?—but do *you* keep out of *my* way, and I'll keep out of yours! I see by the color of your cheek that you understand me well! a word to the wise is sufficient, you know! But I hear you're goin' in the *Garrick*, too,—better for you if you didn't, for it's as hard for *you* to keep from your devilment as it is for me to keep from stooping. I'll be off now, but mind you behave yourself!"

Herbert was only too glad to get rid of his troublesome visitor by a ready "yes! yes! don't fear!" and then turned quickly into the bar-room, whilst the hunchback made his exit by the hall-door, leaving the waiters both amused and amazed at his perfect self-possession and the air of authority which contrasted so oddly with his shabby habiliments.

By the light of a farthing candle which burned on a table between them in a tin candlestick, Paul Brannigan and Widow Sheehan sat looking at each other in a way peculiar to each. They had been talking of the subject nearest old Dolly's heart, and she had been trying what rhetoric she possessed to induce Paul to reveal what he knew of Philip's fate.

"Wisha, then, Paul (if it's that they call you), I can't get it out o' my head but you know more about Philip than you choose to tell. Maybe it's married the boy is, or something

that way, an' sure if he is you needn't fear to tell me—it's nothing but what his father done before him."

"Well! now, see here, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am!" said the hunchback very seriously, "what interest would I have in keeping it from *you*, in case I knew myself?"

He tried to look very frank and unembarrassed, and fixed his little black eyes on the widow's face in a way that seemed to challenge scrutiny. Still there was a sort of nervous twitching going on about the mouth, and a restlessness of the whole person that did not escape the sharp eyes of the anxious mother. She shook her head but said nothing.

"Don't you b'lieve me, ma'am?" asked Paul with an air of offended dignity.

"Well, that I mayn't sin but it's puzzled I am entirely," returned Dolly in a dejected tone; "I b'lieve you, honest man! why wouldn't I! but there's something in my heart that tells me you know more than you're willin' to let *me* know. God help me, anyhow!"

The sigh that accompanied these words brought a tear to Paul's eye, and he began winking very hard to get rid of it unseen by Dolly. He affected, moreover, to be very angry, and got up from his chair with the air of a man who felt himself injured.

"I'll tell you what it is now, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am! since you don't believe what I say——"

"And what is that, astore?" asked the old woman suddenly, and with a half stupified air; "sure myself forgets what you tould me about Philip?"

"I told you," said Paul in a voice that he vainly tried to keep steady, and affecting a sternness which was foreign to his heart at the moment, "I told you that I knew your son once—some years ago—but that I know nothing of him now. I declare I wish I hadn't said anything about it. It's purty bother I have with yourself and your son! isn't it now?"

"The Lord forgive me!" he muttered to himself.

"Oh! then don't be vexed with me, *ahagur*!—sure only I see you're a decent man, an' a feelin' man, too, I wouldn't make so free as I do——"

"Well! feelin' here or feelin' there, I don't want to hear a word more about that son of yours—as long as we're at sea, anyhow!—when we get to New York, maybe I'd go with you to see about him!"

"God reward you, honest man!" sobbed the old woman as she wiped her eyes with the corner of her blue cotton apron. "Och! och! but it's easy known where the decent drop is—see the way it is with that bit of a half-sir that I seen you talkin' to aboard the boat—he hasn't a civil word for any one that's lower than himself."

"Barrin' that girl from Ardfinnan—Bessy Conway," said the hunchback with a grim smile.

"What's that you say?" cried Dolly Sheehan with a start. "Do you think he'd be havin' an eye after the colleen?—God keep her out of *his* clutches any way, for, indeed, she's a fine likely little body, an' what's more, I think she's a decent father an' mother's child, and has nothing in her barrin' what's good. But sure *he'd* never think of the like's of *her*?" she added.

"Not for any good, granny, you may be sure!"

"Wisha, then, Paul, it's not safe for him to be in her way, for, give the devil his due! he's a clean, clever boy to look at. He has a face on him that 'id deceive a Saint——"

"He's passable," said Paul with a surly nod, "but that's neither here nor there—little Bessy's safe enough."

"How do you know that, Paul?"

"No matter *how* I know it—it's true, and that's enough, granny." And again the little man nodded, but this time with an air of great complacency and self-satisfaction.

"Well! myself doesn't know what to make of you," observed the old woman, after studying Paul's face for a moment; "you're a mighty close man, sure enough, but anyhow! the Lord enable

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Here the door was opened suddenly, and in came a big burly man, with a fair complexion, and a good-natured, open countenance. He accosted Paul with a loud laugh, à propos to nothing, it would seem, and a thump of his big fist on the shoulder that made the little man stagger on his feet, putting up his hand at the same time to rub the afflicted part.

"Why, then, bad manners to you for a *sprissaun*!" cried Ned Finigan, for he it was, "is it here you are, an' me huntin' you up and down this hour back? I see the work you're at"—throwing a humorous glance at the old woman—"well! it's only natural, but, indeed, you're a purty couple, God bless you! Ahem! hem!"

"We're as God made us," said Paul gruffly; "was that your business with me that you took so much trouble to find me?"

"Ha! ha! ha! that's good, too! isn't it, granny? little more, an' he'd bite me; he's so mad because I praised him to his face—next time I'll say he's ugly—I hope *that* will please him."

"What did you want with me?"

"Don't be vexed, an' I'll tell you. Did you see that purty little fair-haired colleen that's waitin' on Captain Walters' lady?"

"I did—you mean Bessy Conway."

"Sorra one else—well! she's a cousin of mine by the mother's side."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"Why so, aroon?"

"Why, because, you're big enough and strong enough to take her part when she wants a friend?"

"Then you think she's likely to want one?" said Ned anxiously—"that's jist what I meant to ask you. They tell me there's a scape-grace of a fellow here that's comin' after her to America, an' that *you* know all about him——"

"Don't be callin' hard names," said Paul with *keen* irony—"he's a gentleman's son, that chap!"

"If he was a king's son, and said or did that girl wrong"—and Ned's brow darkened fearfully, and he clenched his brawny fist—"by the—I'll not swear—no, I won't—but as sure as God's in heaven, and that's sure enough, I'd break every bone in his body, so I would!"

"That's right—stick to that, an' you'll do," said little Paul with an encouraging nod.

"But you said," went on Ned, "that he was a gentleman's son—I bar that—I know his father too well to my cost—he's a dirty low beggar-man, that's what he is, for all the money and value he has! No, I didn't come here to ask you *who* the fellow is, but *what* he is; that's what I wanted to hear from you—if you know it!"

"Maybe I do, maybe I don't," said Paul raising his dwarfish form to its utmost height, "but, whether or no, the time isn't come yet to make it known. But mind you watch him well, Ned Finigan! and nail him—do you hear?—nail him on the spot if you catch him makin' too free with Bessy. I hope, now, you're a good soldier?" he added, looking earnestly up in the other's face. "I hope you *are*, for I'm thinkin' that lad carries arms about him."

"What if he does?" cried the big man fiercely. "I tell you, I'd think as little of what he could do, arms an' all, as if he was a block of the same inches. Is it me a good soldier? why, man, there never was one of the name since the days of Oliver Cromwell that hadn't the heart of a lion! Did you ever hear tell of the jolly butcher that saved Ardfinnan Castle from the Cromwellians?"

"I never heard of him!" said Paul with a careless shake of the head, winking, however, at old Dolly.

"You didn't! well! that's strange, anyhow!—why, I thought every one heard of *him*. He was a mighty great hero entirely, an' a forebearer of mine to boot. I see you hardly b'lieve me,



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but there's not a word o' lie in what I tell you. That very man, Jerry Fahy by name—by the same token Jerry is an old family-name with my mother's people—that very man was no less than my great, great grandfather." And Ned looked first at Paul, then at old Dolly, with the air of a man who expected to receive the homage of his auditors.

"See that now!" cried Dolly holding up her hands with real or pretended wonder.

"Humph!" said Paul very shortly, "I hope you'll never disgrace him!"

"Disgrace him! why no, man alive! I don't intend it, but wouldn't you wish to hear how it happened?"

"Some other time will do as well, Ned!—we'll all have an early start of it the morrow!" In pursuance of this hint, Ned bade the others good night, remarking that they'd have time enough to talk.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE STORM

"Didn't I send him off purty quick that day, captain?" said Paul to Captain Walters when, the bustle of departure being over, and the Mersey cleared, that gentleman had time to attend to private matters. "I'm thinkin' I soon cleared the stairs of him."

"You're a brick, Paul!" said the captain with a good-humored smile; "my wife, who overheard all that passed, has a high opinion of you ever since."

"Of me, your honor!" said Paul with becoming modesty, "why the lady is very good to think of me at all—it's what I couldn't expect."

"But tell me this, Paul, if it be a fair question: what hold have you on this individual—my wife says you seem to have him entirely under control."

"Well! the question is fair enough, your honor," said Paul assuming a very innocent look, "but I'd rather not answer it at this time, for a little reason I have. No offence I hope, captain?"

"Oh! not the slightest, my good fellow! on second thoughts, I'm better pleased not to hear it. Secrets are heavy loads to carry, and I have no notion of troubling myself with other people's burdens. Only mind you keep a sharp look-out, as I will myself, and I think the two of us will certainly be a match for your friend's cunning."

"There's another on the watch now, captain, so the deuce is in it if Herbert plays any pranks here."

"Who is the other, pray?"

"Oh bedad, a man that ought to be able to clear a fair any day, if his courage is equal to his size. He's the biggest man on board, your honor, and a blood relation of the little colleen's."

Hearing this the captain laughed heartily. "Truly," said he, "the little colleen, as you call her, has no lack of protection. Seeing that I have the *Garrick* and a dainty little wife to look after, I think I may safely leave Bess to yourself and the biggest man on board—the least and the greatest, ha! ha! ha!"

"'Deed you may, captain, 'deed you may, sir!—we'll do the business, Ned an' I—that's Ned Finigan, sir!"

It was wearing on towards evening, and a clear, bright evening, too. The cabin passengers were nearly all on the promenade deck enjoying the beauty of sky and sea, some pacing to and fro in solitary musing, others arm in arm with friends or acquaintances in lively and familiar conversation. Some were lounging idly and listlessly on the freshly-painted settees placed in a double row midway along the deck. One was leaning over the taffrail looking moodily down on the green waves as they rolled along in crested majesty towards the fast receding shores of England. Of what was he thinking, that lonely man, young and handsome, and of gentlemanly bearing? Why did he keep himself thus aloof from his fellow-passengers at the time when all were impelled to break down at once the icy barriers of reserve and make the acquaintance of those with whom they were bound to associate for some weeks at least? Was it sorrow for leaving home, and friends, and native land? or was it anxious fears and doubts regarding his success in the New World? was the shadow that hung over him from the future or from the past?

None could tell what was passing in the young man's mind, except it might be Paul Brannigan whose large head and elfin eyes were visible at one end of the deck where he stood

on the companion-ladder eyeing the solitary watcher with a grin half humorous half malicious. It was like a cat watching a mouse of whose final capture she was sufficiently certain. After gazing a few moments with that sort of basilisk expression which must have fascinated the other had he turned towards him, the head disappeared, its owner being doubtless satisfied with his observation.

But still the young man stirred not. His eyes were fixed in deep thought, and gradually a darker expression overspread his features, and his brows contracted with an angry frown.

"What a fool they take me for!" he said within himself, "to think that I—I—Henry Herbert—am leaving friends and country to follow a smooth-faced country girl across the ocean! Her own conceit led her into that notion when she saw me on board, and, of course, I didn't put her off the scent. Well! I believe I *have* a fancy for the girl, but nothing like what she and others seem to suppose. But then that abominable hunchback—to think of him starting up as if the Old Boy sent him on purpose to torment me, just when I thought I was rid of *him* anyhow. He haunts me like a ghost—go where I will, I cannot shake him off. Is it fate—or—or what? But why does he follow me in this way? what gain would my exposure be to him? No matter how it is, I must only put a bold face on the matter, and keep him off the track the best way I can—ha! ha! let him follow his cursed nose, and that will do for the present! raise your head now, Henry Herbert, like a man! and drive dull care away—sorrow's time enough when it comes, my boy!"

By the time Herbert had reached this conclusion the weather had undergone a remarkable change. Dark masses of clouds were gathering around the setting sun, and the billows were heaving with sudden and strong commotion. All at once the seamen were observed moving hither and thither with increased activity, and the deep voices of the officers were heard fore and aft giving orders:

"Reef the top-sail there!"—"Haul in the lanyards!"

The passengers on deck were all more or less alarmed by the sudden change in the weather and the corresponding movements amongst the crew. Captain Walters came himself, too, and spoke in nautical phrase to the man at the wheel, a sturdy mariner of mature years.

"Tack about," said he, "and keep to windward—look out for the Irish coast!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" The seaman's heavy features were stirred by no emotion, but hard and fast he turned the wheel, as beneath his guiding hand the vessel slowly turned her head, and she reeled like a drunken man as the rising breeze shook her shrouds and bent her taper spars. The helmsman looked up at the darkening sky whence the sun had long since vanished, and he smiled grimly at the captain who was watching his face.

"No sleep to-night, Bill?" said the captain in a low voice.

"Mayhap more than we bargain for," was the curt and gloomy reply. The captain nodded and turned away quickly. He was instantly beset by an anxious crowd of the passengers, chiefly of the gentler sex.

"Good heavens, Captain Walters! is there any danger?"

"Dear me, captain! are we going to have a storm?"

"Only a squall, madam! only a squall."

"But is there any danger?"

"I hope not—be so good as to let me pass, ladies!"

"But what *are* we to do?"

"Keep quiet—that is all."

Captain Walters was a good-natured man and a gentleman, moreover, but to be thus hemmed in at such a moment and besieged with what he considered idle questions was more than flesh and blood could bear. So he began to elbow one out of his way here and another there, and at last succeeded in making his retreat to the companion-ladder, muttering between his teeth:

"Those good old monks were about right after all. Plague on them for women!"

When the captain had done all that he could to provide for the safety of the vessel, the storm beginning to rage with great violence, he stole for a moment from his arduous duties to see how his wife was affected by the threatening aspect of affairs. He found her pale, calm and collected, sitting, or trying to sit, by a table in their little cabin, whilst Bessy Conway knelt in a corner saying her beads aloud and with great fervor.

"Well, Addie, my dear!" said the captain with a forced smile, as he took his wife's hand and pressed it between his own, "this is rather a stiff breeze we've got—all of a sudden, too. I hope you're not frightened!"

"Well no, not exactly frightened, William, but—but—a storm is always awful."

"Yes, yes, but my little wife has seen the *Garrick* weather worse storms than this is—yet. If we can only keep clear of that dreary Irish coast till the gale has spent its fury, I have no fears for the rest. The *Garrick* is strong enough for any breeze, if she have but sea-room. Keep up your heart, my precious one! for as yet there is no immediate danger."

"I will, dear, I will," said the wife in a low tone, "but oh! William, if I could only pray—if I could—but I cannot——"

"Why, I think you have no need to trouble yourself, Addie," said the captain with a poor attempt at laughing; "if praying will do, this girl of yours appears to be praying enough for both. Good-bye! sweetheart, I will come again as soon as I can."

"For God's sake, do, William!—I am not afraid, but oh! it is a fearful storm!"

"Can't you go join the other ladies for company?"

"Oh no! no! I am better alone—their company would but make me worse!—but go, William, go! let me not detain you a moment. Oh God! what a tempest!" she cried, as the door slammed after her husband and the ship plunged down into the ocean depths.

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"Say your prayers, ma'am dear!" said Bessy, whose pale cheek and quivering lip testified her emotion though she tried to appear composed; "say your prayers—God will hear them!" Mrs. Walters involuntarily sank on her knees and buried her face in her hands.

The ladies' cabin was by this time a scene of wild confusion. Some were crying and wringing their hands, some fainting away with terror, others endeavoring to console and encourage, others, like Bessy Conway, kneeling in fervent supplication to the throne of Mercy. Husbands and fathers and brothers were there, some of them trying to keep up the failing spirits of their female relatives, others moodily pondering on the probable termination of the scene.

The sea was raging mountains high, and the hatches were nailed down by the captain's orders to protect all below from the ravages of the angry waters which ever and anon came sweeping over the deck with resistless fury. Amid the wild roar of the breakers and the sound of rushing billows came dolefully from below the cries of the steerage and second cabin passengers, terrified by the convulsive motions of the laboring vessel whose stout ribs cracked and quivered in the fierce blast.

It was a dismal chorus, raging winds, storm-tossed waves and the voice of human anguish. And the scene which met the eye was no less dreary, whether one looked up to the pitchy sky or down to the boiling ocean, or forward to the flickering lights which marked the rocky coast of Ireland. It would seem at first that the promenade deck, so lately crowded with well-dressed men and women, was now left to the wild solitude of the waters, and the motionless form of Bill, who was still at his post, "lashed to the helm." Not so, there was another there, another silent spectral-looking figure leaning against the capstan with folded arms, as though unconscious or at least regardless of the elemental war around him and the imminent danger to which he thus exposed himself.

Was it the demon of the storm contemplating his own work and exulting in its ravages? No such thing, it was Henry Herbert who, sick of the scene in the cabin, had managed to make his way back thither, where he could at least see the extent of the danger. Seeing him there, the helmsman could at first hardly believe his eyes, and when once convinced of the reality of the vision, he supposed him one of those supernatural beings who figure so oft in the seaman's tales of wonder, and with great *sang froid* settled it in his own mind that it was Davy Jones himself come to look after the *Garrick*.

In truth he was a wild unearthly figure, as he stood there in the black starless night, his uncovered head exposed to the fury of the elements, and his rich brown hair dripping with the briny spray. His face was pale as a sheeted corpse, and his eyes were wild and haggard, as the fast-flashing lightning shone on his unsheltered form. His thoughts were of death—death and judgment, but not of repentance. Fear and despair were in his soul, for he thought the hour of vengeance was at hand and the arm of God raised to smite him. He had heard of eternal perdition, and he had laughed many a time at that “cock-and-bull story”—now he felt its dread reality and began to feel what it was to fall into the hands of an angry God.

Hark! was that an echo from within or without? was that voice from heaven, or earth, or hell? Again it spoke and Herbert's heart sank within him, and the blood in his veins ran cold as ice, and the hair on his head bristled up as if instinct with horror.

“Henry Herbert!” said the voice at his elbow, “does this night put you in mind of anything?—ha! ha! ha!” the laugh sounded dreary and sepulchral to Henry's ear, and he trembled from head to foot.

“Ho! ho! ho!” said the voice again, lowly and slowly, but fearfully distinct, “that was a brave stirring night in *the place you know*, when the winds, and the thunder, and the lightning were at work, and the sperits were peepin' in at the windows



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"Ha! it is you, then, misbegotten fiend! I know you now," and turning with the fury of a maniac, Herbert clutched the thick bushy hair of the hunchback and held him fast.

"Ho! ho! ho! do you mean to kill me?"

"I'll throw you overboard, I will by the——"

"Don't for your life swear an oath," said the little man stoutly, "you've brought this on us all—don't make matters worse by your curses! I know you're not hardened enough for murder, an' I don't want to expose you——"

"You don't?" said Herbert scoffingly.

"No, I don't—if I did it isn't there you'd be but out in the say, for if I only gave the sailors a hint of *the thing you know*, all the captains livin' wouldn't save you, for they'd think it was *you* brought the storm on us—an', God knows, but may be it is!—you raised it that other night as sure as death is death!——"

"What brought you here?" shrieked Herbert, but he let go his grasp.

"What brought yourself here?" screamed the hunchback, elevating his shrill voice to the highest, and he chuckled at the thought of how nicely he had tricked the sailors when they drove all the rest down below and nailed the hatches on them, the creatures!

"There they go," said the man at the wheel, "Lord ha' mercy! two of our poor fellows washed overboard! Down! down for your lives!"

Herbert flung himself down and wound his arms around the capstan; well for him he did, for the next moment a heavy sea washed the deck and surged over his prostrate head—as it retired and left him in the same position. At the same moment a fearful crash was heard, and again the helmsman spoke:

"There! the mainmast's gone!"

"I hope to the Lord *he's* gone, too!" said Herbert to him-

self as he scrambled to his feet. Little affected by the wonderful escape he had had, or even by the fatal event which had just taken place, lessening so fearfully their chance of ultimate safety, he thought only of the possibility that the waves had rid him once for all of the troublesome little hunchback. Another flash of lightning convinced him of his error, for within a few feet of him, kneeling close to the bulwark, was the crouching form of Paul Brannigan, his hands clasped in prayer, and his eyes raised through the awful depths of darkness overhead to the throne of the God of mercy.

The curse that rose to Herbert's lips was choked in his mouth by another fearful billow rolling over him, and stunned by the overwhelming force of the waters he lost all consciousness. The last sound that reached his ear as he sank on the deck was the half-smothered voice of the helmsman answering a call from some of the officers. "Great God of heaven! we are drifting on the rocks!" was Herbert's last thought. He heard or saw no more.

During all this time Bessy Conway was kneeling beside her mistress, now powerless with terror, now praying all the Court of Heaven to be propitious. At times she grew quite eloquent in urging her petition, addressing in particular the Blessed Mother of Christians.

"Oh! dear Mother Mary!" she said with fervor, "you know you are called the Star of the Sea!—all is dark with us now and we have no other star to give us light!—you're the Help of Christians, too, oh Blessed Mother! Help *us* now, then, in our sore, sore need!—don't let us perish here on this dreadful ocean where we'd never get Christian burial—I know, I know there's many a poor creature in this ship on their knees to you at this time—hear our prayers, then, and don't desert your own poor children in the hour of need!"

Mrs. Walters listened half amused, half edified, and when Bessy was again silent she said to her with a dreary smile:

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"I only wish your 'dear mother,' as you call her, *could* hear your prayer and do something for us!"

"She *can* do it, Mrs. Walters, dear! she can, and she will!"

The lady shook her head with a sad smile, and groaned in anguish as the shrieks and cries came louder from the adjoining cabin. Just then the fall of the mainmast made the ship's timbers quiver.

"Oh, Bessy, Bessy!" said the horror-stricken mistress, there's our mainmast gone!—there is little chance now!—oh! my husband! my dear husband! why—why does he not come to me?" And the lady wrung her white hands in anguish.

The sight of her despair made Bessy forget her own share in the danger. "Keep up your heart, my dear mistress!" she said with tearful eyes, "my mother told me comin' away to remember always that 'God never deserts them that don't desert Him'—now you'll see what He'll do for *us*—oh! Blessed Mother! what's that?"

The huge vessel gave a roll and a plunge and appeared to settle on one side.

"Oh God! oh God! she's going down!" Mrs. Walters cried in mortal terror.

"No, she isn't, ma'am dear! she'll not go down!" still answered Bessy. Back with another plunge went the ship to her former position, and at the same moment Captain Walters burst into the room, his face radiant with joy.

"Joy, Addie! joy!" he cried catching his wife in his arms, "the wind has suddenly tacked about and is bearing us off the land—the weather is calmer, too, than it was!"

His wife could not answer from excess of joy, but Bessy jumped to her feet and clapped her hands. "I knew it," she cried, "I knew it—didn't I tell you, ma'am, that God and the Blessed Virgin would befriend us?—ha! ha! ha! sure I knew it well enough!" And the excited girl burst into a fit of hysterical laughter, which at any other time would have startled and amazed the hearers. But for them they heeded her not

at all, being far too much absorbed in their own happiness to pay any attention to their little servant girl.

"Well, Lord bless me!" said Bessy to herself, "to be such good people as they are, isn't it curious how little thought of God they have!"

"Do you think we're safe now, William?" asked Mrs. Walters.

"I'd fain hope so, my dear!"

"And no one lost?"

"I wish I could say yes," replied the captain, and his countenance fell."

"Why who—who is missing?"

"Two of the crew—Sam Jones and Hal Herrick!"

"Dear! dear! how did *that* happen?"

"Washed overboard! Good-bye, Addie! I must go see the cabin passengers and relieve *their* fears!"

"And the steerage, sir?" said Bessy in a timid voice.

"Oh! *they're* all right, my girl," said the good-natured captain, "they're safe under the hatches, but we must keep them there till the danger is entirely over!" He had opened the door to go out, but started back with an exclamation of surprise:

"Why, who the mischief have we here?"

"It's only me, captain dear!" squeaked a shrill voice from the midst of a dripping bundle of clothes as it seemed at first, then throwing back the cape of an old-fashioned "big-coat" in which he was enveloped, the ungainly form of the hunch-back stood revealed.

"For the love of God let me in!" cried Paul in piteous accents, whilst the captain stared at him in blank surprise.

"Where *did* you come from?" he asked with a strong temptation to laugh.

"From the deck overhead, your honor!—sure I hid myself for fear of bein' nailed down below,—an' I wish I hadn't—if I had only taken my chance with the rest, it's better off I'd be now."

"Let the poor fellow in," said Mrs. Walters. The hunchback tumbled in accordingly, while the captain laughed and passed on.

"God's blessin' be about you, ma'am," said Paul, "I hope you'll never want a shelter. Sure I wouldn't know where on earth to go to only I saw the light in your little windows here. There's another poor devil a'most dead up above. I don't know but he's clean gone by this time——"

"And who is that?" said Mrs. Walters compassionately.

"Well! it's only an unlucky good-for-nothing of the name of Herbert!" said Paul with a stealthy glance at Bessy. "He's one of the cabin passengers whatever kept him on deck——"

"Did you say he was lost?" asked Bessy in a voice that trembled in spite of her.

"Well! he's not lost, a colleen, so long as a body knows where he is! But I'm not sure that the life is in him, for all he's sittin' propped up on the deck. I tried hard to do what I could for him, but it wasn't much—he had no sense or feelin' in him when I left him."

"Dear me! is there no one there to look after him?" said Mrs. Walters anxiously. "Why, he should be seen to at once. I wish the captain had known."

"If I only knew where it was, ma'am, I'd try and make him out," said Bessy with a blushing cheek; "it's hard to leave a Christian there at the mercy of the waves and the wind. Maybe he is dead by this time, as the decent man says."

"But how can *we* help him, Bessy?—it would be as much as your life or mine would be worth to venture out on the quarter-deck now!—remember the storm is not all over yet and the waves are washing the deck every few moments."

"The more need to try and save him, ma'am—oh think—think of his poor soul!—I'll go, Mrs. Walters, in God's name—you'll see I'll save him."

"The girl's right, ma'am," said the hunchback gathering himself up; "bad as he is, it wouldn't do to leave him *where*

*he is*—come along, Bessy ! I'll show you the way, and help you what I can."

"Well ! if you must go—go !" said Mrs. Walters ; " I do feel a little anxious myself. If you find him, bring him here !

"If we find him !" repeated Bessy in a low voice, as she followed the hunchback ; " oh God forbid we didn't ! Only for me he wouldn't be here," she said within herself, " and it will go hard with me or I'll save him !"

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## CHAPTER IV.

THE storm had passed away and with it the danger, the mainmast was replaced by another as stout and staunch, which had lain on the deck in provision for such contingency, and the *Garrick* was again under full sail speeding away westward. The passengers released from their gloomy prison, and restored to hope and confidence, were all the more cheerful and hilarious for the cloud that had obscured their prospects. Now that the danger was passed, they could afford to talk, and even laugh, over their previous terrors, and discuss at their leisure the impressions made on their minds by the scenes they had witnessed. It was drawing towards evening on the day following that first awful night at sea when the *Garrick* passed within sight of the Irish coast, and oh! how beautiful it looked in the roseate light of the setting sun! How dear it was each one felt at that last sad moment—they knew not before how much they loved that "Isle of beauty" till the well-spring in their hearts gushed forth at the sight of the land which had hitherto been their home—the land of childhood's happy days, where dead friends lay in their quiet graves awaiting the Resurrection, and living hearts still beat warmly for them, and sadly mourned their departure. As the wanderers gazed through the mist of tears on that fast-fading dream of beauty they thought that nothing could ever repay them for the sacrifice they were making, and as the last point of the well-loved island disappeared amid the waves on the distant horizon it seemed as though the last hold of life were snapped asunder.

Bessy Conway had stolen out to take a last look at the fading shores of her native land, and stationed herself, as she thought, unobserved, between the end of the galley and the cabin door. She was thinking with a saddened heart on the many ties that bound her to the Old Land so rapidly passing from her view, when the voice of Herbert struck mournfully on her ear, and turning quickly she saw him at her side pale and haggard. He smiled sadly as her eyes met his.

"Thinking of home, Bessy!—well it is hard to turn one's back on a country like that," and he cast his eyes languidly on the picturesque coast before them. "Still *your* grief is not bitter—there is no dark thought of sin or shame coming between you and the fair land you love so well. Oh Bessy! were every heart here as innocent as yours, sorrow would be almost joy."

Bessy dried her own tears and looked up in surprise. She had never heard Herbert talk so before, and there was something in the tone of his voice that went to her heart, she knew not why. His face was turned towards the land, and he seemed so lost in his own thoughts, that he took no heed of her presence. It was but for a moment, however, for suddenly he laid his hand on her shoulder and looked her full in the face.

"Bessy," said he, "in all probability you saved my life last night when you ventured out through wind and rain to seek me. I'll never forget *that* to you, Bessy! I'm not so hardened as some may think—don't cry, my little girl, and don't turn away your head. *I'll* be your friend if you'll only let me. I will indeed, *indeed*! Bessy, I have money enough for both, and you shall never know a sorrow or a want that I can prevent."

"Oh Master Henry!" said Bessy in a voice half choked with sobs, "don't—don't talk so—it is not right for me to hear you!"



"And why, Bessy? why is it not right?"—and he tried to take her hand, which she resolutely withheld—"what care I now for the opinion of those who were called my equals?—I am going to a country where my name is no more than yours—share my lot, then, and I will share yours, and we shall be all the world to each other!—you shall find that Henry Herbert is not so black as they paint him!"

"The devil himself is no blacker!" said a squeaking voice from behind, and the ill-favored countenance of the hunchback protruded itself between the two in strange and startling contrast.

At the same moment a rough heavy hand laid hold of Herbert's arm, and the Stentorian lungs of Ned Finigan vociferated "What's goin' on here? Go about your business, my young chap! this is no place for you!"

"And who are you that dares to say so?" asked Herbert haughtily.

"It's nothing to you who I am, but take yourself off, or I'll do it for you!"

The hunchback grinned from ear to ear, but Bessy, frightened by Ned's menacing look, laid her hand on his arm and whispered: "Don't look so cross, Ned! don't now!—speak him fair and he'll do whatever you want!"

Still Herbert showed no intention of moving, but stood eyeing the big man and the little with a smile of supercilious mockery.

"You won't go, then?" said Ned very quietly as it seemed.

"Not at your bidding, most assuredly!"

Shaking off Bessy's hand as though it were a feather, Ned Finigan laid hold of Herbert, and taking him across his arms as one would a little child he mounted the companion-ladder and placed him astride on the railing which marked the boundary of the quarter-deck, Herbert the while kicking and plunging as vainly in his grasp as though it were a vice that held him.

"There's a fine seat for you now," said Ned in a voice loud enough to attract general attention, "where the ladies can all get a sight of you. Man alive! don't twist and turn that way or you'll fall and break your bones! Steady now! steady!"

Both decks were crowded at the moment and all eyes were instantly turned on the actors in this strange scene. Shouts of laughter arose from the main deck where some notions had got abroad rather unfavorable to "the half-sir," whilst even the more polished cabin passengers at the other end were unable to restrain their mirth within the bounds of politeness. Some few there were who pitied the aggrieved person, especially when they recognized him as one of their own number. Amongst these was Mrs. Walters, whose gentle heart was ever open to kindly sympathy. She felt anxious to see how Herbert would act under such trying circumstances, and though more than suspecting the cause of Ned's singular freak, still she was vexed at so public an exposure of the good-looking young Irishman who, after all, might be guilty of no worse crime than a liking for her pretty maid. She fully expected to see him slink away overwhelmed with shame and confusion, but she found herself mistaken.

Whatever might have been his inward emotions he managed to conceal them and that in a way that astonished every one. Stepping lightly down from his awkward position he forced a smile that made his wan face look ghastly, and turned to Ned Finigan who stood at the top of the ladder, waiting, doubtless, to enjoy his confusion.

"That was well done," said he, "very well done indeed. I really had no idea of your prodigious strength. Why, man, if you choose to enter the ring in New York you will beat Yankee Sullivan hollow!—ha! ha! ha! to take me in his arms up the ladder! Upon my honor! that is good!"

This was addressed to a gentleman standing near who had been one of the first to indulge his mirth at Herbert's expense. Being a stranger he could not detect the unnatural sternness

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that was hidden beneath that ironical laugh, or the anguish indicated by the half-uttered words. He only saw an assumption of dignity and self-possession which surprised him under the circumstances. So it was with all the others, and as Herbert walked up the deck, still preserving the same air half-defiant, half-humorous, the smile and the laugh died away on every lip, and people followed him with their eyes as a person deserving of some attention. Having made a turn up and down the deck, and exchanged a few civil words with Mrs. Walters who had kindly inquired how he found himself after the night's adventure, he leaned for a few moments against the bulwark, apparently taking a last fond look at the blue misty line which marked the outline of his native shore, then walked very composedly down the ladder and was seen no more that evening.

"He's a confounded queer fellow that Herbert!" said Captain Walters to his wife the next time they were alone together; "I happened to be where I had a full view of the proceedings, and I give you my honor, Addie Walters, he played his part well to turn the laugh on the big fellow as he did. I fancy he must have felt rather small, for he made his retreat very quietly."

"Well! I know not how it is," observed the lady, "but I have more sympathy with that young man than I ever thought to have. He *may* be bad and have bad designs, but there is nothing of the *villain* about him as far as I can judge. Now tell me this, William! if the countenance be the index of the mind, whether is Herbert or that ill-looking dwarf the most reliable?"

"Did you never hear the old saying, Addie, that the book is not to be taken by the cover?"

"Yes, yes, but I have no faith in it—people *will* take the book by the cover were there fifty axioms to the contrary. I tell you I cannot believe Herbert a villain!"

"Don't trust him for all that, Addie! take my advice!"

Bessy coming in at the moment the subject was, of course, dropped. The captain applied himself to his log-book, and his wife had leisure to observe that there was an angry flush on Bessy's cheek and a frown on her fair brow.

"What's the matter, Bessy?" said the mistress in a low voice.

"Oh! nothing at all, ma'am!"

"Are you sure, now?"

"Well! nothing worth speaking of—it was only some words I had with a cousin of mine!"

Mrs. Walters smiled but said nothing. "Ned has been catching it!" she said to herself, "small thanks he will get from Bessy for his officious meddling!"

Ned had come to about the same conclusion himself by that time. He and Bessy had quarrelled on the head of his late escapade, and she had told him pretty plainly to mind his own business, whereupon Ned answered that he was minding his business when chastising Herbert, "for" said he, "I see well enough how things would go if I let people have their way, and if shame or blame came on my own blood, wouldn't I have my share of the disgrace? It is my own business, Bessy Conway! and there isn't a time I catch you colloquing with that scape-grace but I'll make a show of you both!" "And what good will that do you?" "Good or no good, I'll try it anyhow—so now you're warned, and don't blame me if I have to do what I say!" Not another word would Ned hear.

What wonder was it that Bessy's brow was clouded that evening, and her mind ill at ease?

Whether it was from fear of Ned's threat or a prudent desire to avoid Herbert, the girl kept so close to Mrs. Walters' cabin for the next eight or ten days that no one could get a sight of her. Meanwhile Ned Finigan and Henry Herbert had come to an understanding, and no very amicable one either. They had been rather avoiding each other since the affair of "the chairing" (as Ned's friends facetiously called Herbert's involuntary ascent to the quarter-deck), but it so happened that

they found themselves face to face one moonlight night about a week after, when most of the passengers were sitting in groups here and there beguiling the time with song and story.

"Ned Finigan (if that be your name)," said Herbert in a low hissing tone, "I've an account to settle with *you*, but the chances are against me for the present. The means are not at my disposal just now, but I have a good memory, Ned, and you will find yourself paid with reasonable interest some day when you least expect it. You understand me, I hope?"

"Indeed then I do, and I give you free leave and liberty to do your worst. I don't care *that* for you, Henry Herbert!" and he snapped his fingers close to his face. "You understand me, I hope?" mimicking the other's tone. Herbert smiled a ghastly smile, and nodded, and passed on up the ladder to join the company on the quarter-deck. There was a deep red spot on either cheek and a lurid light in his eyes that boded no good, but he glided into the shade of the awning, and no one thought of observing him at the moment. Ned stood looking after him with a curious expression, half ridicule, half wonder, then turned carelessly on his heel and strode along the deck to where he saw the Murphys, and Paul Brannigan, and old Dolly Sheehan, sitting near the fore-castle.

"What's that he was sayin' to you?" whispered Paul, as Ned took possession of the place which Ally Murphy bashfully made for him next herself.

"Why, bad manners to you, Paul, have you eyes in the back of your head?" said Ned with a light-hearted laugh. "I didn't think you could see us from here?"

"You see I did, then—what did he say?"

"I'll tell you again. 'Hem!' raising his voice, 'weren't you sayin', Ally, that you'd wish to hear 'The Shannon Side'?"

"Well! if it's pleasin' to you, Mr. Finigan, I would, then."

Clearing his throat vociferously, Ned commenced his "stave," and before he had got through the first verse his loud clear voice had attracted scores of the passengers to the spot, and

the well-known air was caught up at each refrain and repeated in a full chorus that sounded rich and musical on the still air, and rolled away in murmuring echoes over the moonlit waves.

Amongst the cabin passengers there was a gentleman of thin spare proportions who sat much alone, generally reading, as some of the ladies observed, "in a very curious-looking black book, which, for aught they knew, might be something akin to that taken from the wizard's grave, and the dead man's hand in fair Melrose, by 'William of Deloraine, good at need.' " The book, indeed, and the quiet gentlemanly owner thereof were frequent subjects of speculation amongst the fair idlers of the promenade-deck, and more than once the grave and somewhat pensive countenance of this studious personage brightened with a humorous smile as he heard light, stealthy footsteps passing behind him as he sat, and knew that fair prying eyes were endeavoring to get a peep over his shoulder at the book in his hand, whose illuminated pages certainly presented a strange symbolical character.

Captain Walters contributed not a little to increase the feeling of curiosity that existed with regard to the gentleman in black who was known amongst his fellow-passengers as Mr. Daly. When questioned concerning him he shook his head and either evaded the subject altogether or answered only by some hints of a very mysterious nature.

What made the matter more strange was the sort of confidential intercourse going on between Mr. Daly and certain of the steerage passengers. Ned Finigan had sundry private interviews with him, during which Ned's demeanor was observed to be of a very bashful kind as he stood before him with head uncovered, twirling his fingers, and otherwise laudably employed in kicking away some chips which luckily lay at his feet. Then the dwarf was seen in close conversation with the owner of the black book who actually testified some emotion as he listened to the little man, and lo! at Paul's next visit he

brought with him no less a person than old Dolly Sheehan, and strange enough, the dark, silent, and rather dignified gentleman shook the old crone's hand very kindly and bent his head and listened quite graciously to what she had to say. This was all passing strange, and the lady-passengers of the *Garrick* were exceedingly anxious to know what it meant, but unfortunately none of them were endowed with such organs of hearing as Prince Fine-Ear in the fairy tale, and the unreasonable man in black always contrived to hold his levee and transact whatever business he had just where they could see but not hear. It was too bad they all agreed, but worse was yet to come, for, one fine morning comes up from the steerage in gala dress arrayed, "the biggest man on board," and with him Peery Murphy and his wife and daughters, ay! and sons, too, and last of all the dwarf, with Dolly Sheehan close by his side. In they all marched to the captain's cabin, and when the door was opened by Bessy Conway, drest in her best and radiant with smiles, who should be seen sitting within but Mr. Daly as provokingly calm and quiet as though there were no mystery about him.

All day curiosity was at its height in the cabin of the *Garrick*. If any there knew or suspected what was going on, they kept the secret to themselves, doubtless enjoying the mystification of the others. It so happened that most of the cabin passengers were English, with a very few Americans, and a small sprinkling of Irish. None of them were Catholics, and their surmises and speculations received a solution towards evening, for which they were by no means prepared. Some of the gentlemen had gallantly volunteered to penetrate the mystery, and great merit was claimed by the lucky individual who succeeded.

"Well! and what is it all about?"

"Who is the gentleman in black?"

"You wouldn't guess, ladies!" said Henry Herbert with assumed gravity. He had known from the first all about it.

"Oh dear! we're tired guessing!"

"Well, then, the gentleman in black is—is——"

"What! who?"

"A Catholic priest!"

"There, Bella, didn't I tell you he was a Jesuit!"

"You told me no such thing, Elly!"

"Oh fie!"

"Why, do tell! a Catholic priest!"

"Well! what more!"

"There's been a wedding to-day," said another gentleman taking up the tale, "the Irish giant has been taking to himself the little Goody-two-shoes in the blue cloak."

"And the dwarf and the old woman—have they come together, too?"

"Well no, not exactly, I suppose they think themselves 'O'er young to marry yet.' Why, ladies, you seem disappointed—not a word of thanks for all my trouble."

"La! it don't amount to anything after all. If I had known he was only a Popish priest, I wouldn't have taken the trouble even to look at him!—if he had turned out to be a spy, or a Turkish dervise——"

"Or a foreign magician, you know!"

"Or one of those Irish Agitators—why, he might have been O'Connell himself, and then, only think what an item that would have been for one's journal! But a common Popish priest! well really now it is too bad!"

Leaving the gentlemen to enjoy the discomfiture of their fair friends on the fall of their pretty card-castle, let us, in virtue of our privilege, take a peep at what was going on in the captain's cabin.

The marriage ceremony was concluded and the company had all paid their respects and offered their congratulations to the happy couple (and indeed it was hard to tell which was the happiest couple there, for Peery Murphy and his wife were about as near the summit of bliss as the new-made



spouses themselves), when Paul Brannigan stood forward and addressed the priest in the following terms:

"Please your reverence, Father Daly, I want to make a bargain with old Mrs. Sheehan here while you and this good company is to the fore."

Every one smiled, and the priest asked in a jocular way, "Is it going to make a match of it you are?"

"Deed, then, it isn't, your reverence; there's neither of us such a fool as that, askin' your reverence's pardon, but I want you all to bear witness that if Mrs. Sheehan doesn't find her son Philip in America where she's goin' to look for him, I'm willin' to take her for a mother and do for her as if she was my own."

Before any one could express the emotion that stirred every heart, the old woman turned sharply on the hunchback:

"Get away wid you now, Paul!" she cried vehemently, "Isn't it all nonsense for you to talk that way? What would all me but I'd find my son? Not but what I'm entirely obliged to *you* for your good wish, but I want no son but Philip—while God spares *him* to me I want no other, and I'll *have* no other till I see him! *He!* he! an' me goin' straight to Philip out in O-hi-o!"

Father Daly had been interrogating Paul by signs, the dwarf having drawn back a step or two behind Dolly, and he laid his hand gently on the old woman's shoulder and asked her what certainty she had that her son was alive.

"Wisha, then, what certainty *would* I have, your reverence, only that I know God would never be so cruel as to take away my boy from me, an' him all I have, an' me neither able to work or want."

The priest shook his head with a melancholy smile. "My dear woman, the ways of God are not *our* ways," he said in a solemn tone, "God is never cruel, but He sometimes sends us, in His great mercy, very heavy afflictions just to try our faith and to withdraw our hearts from the things of this world."

Your son must die one day or another like all the rest of mankind, and who knows but his turn has come before now."

"It has not, your reverence! no, no, *no*! The art of man wouldn't make me b'lieve it!" And the excited old creature burst into tears from the very excess of her agitation. "Please the Lord he'll see me down first, anyhow, as he ought, in the course of nature."

"Don't be too sure, now, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am!" said the hunchback with sudden vivacity; "I don't like people to be too self-willed altogether, an' I'm not pleased with you, so I'm not. Still I'm willin' to stand to my word if you'll only act like a sensible woman and make the best of the worst."

"I'll have nothing to say to you one way or the other," said Dolly snappishly; "don't be botherin' me, I tell you onst for all. Hegh! a purty son *you'd* make!" and she looked so disdainfully at Paul that the little man could stand it no longer.

"Bad as I am, maybe I'm better than none," said he tartly; "I'm all the son you'll ever have now!—d'ye hear that, ma'am?"

"I do, you poor little *sprissawn* of a creature!" cried Dolly in an elevated tone, "but I don't b'lieve one word of it. You're just sayin' it to spite me!"

"Out with it, man!" said the priest in a low voice, "you'll never have a better time."

"To spite you!" repeated Paul, and he fixed his keen little eyes on her face; "ah then, it's little you know Paul Brannigan when you say that! I'd give more money than I'll ever have to see Philip Sheehan alive and well comin' to meet the ould mother that he used to talk so much of!"

"But sure he *will* come to meet me—some day—say he will—God bless you, now, and do!" and Dolly took hold of the dwarf by both arms and looked down into his face. A sad misgiving smote her breast—perhaps for the first time.

Paul looked one side, and then the other, but there was no evading the old eyes that were searching his very soul. At

last, he looked up into Dolly's face with a sort of desperation—his whole frame shook with strong emotion.

"I can't say what's not true, Mrs. Sheehan! Your son is dead—*dead*."

For a moment there was not a word spoken—the two still stood looking into each other's eyes, and the spectators were all, as it were, spell-bound.

At last old Dolly spoke—in a whisper—"Are you *sure* of that?"

"Indeed I am, poor woman! I wish I was as sure of heaven!"

"An' you tell me I have no son to go to?"

"Sorry I am to say it!"

"And I'll never see Philip more?"

"Not in this world," said Father Daly, making an effort to restrain his tears, and taking the old woman's hand tenderly, "but in heaven you'll see him, I hope, for all eternity."

"I hope so, your reverence, I hope so!" murmured Dolly in a dreary, half-conscious way, "but then, *I have no son*, you see!" She turned towards the door without either a sigh or a groan, but seeing every one in tears as she passed, she stopped and looked kindly at each.

"Well! it's very good of you all to cry for a poor lone creature like me—but somehow I can't cry myself. An' they tell me Philip's dead—dead—well, maybe he is! maybe he is!—will some one let me out?" The door was opened and she tottered out apparently but half realizing what she had heard.

Paul would fain have followed, but the priest detained him to tell the manner of Philip's death.

The women hastened after Dolly and conveyed her to her berth, where she lay for three days in a sort of stupor, neither eating nor drinking, and showing consciousness only by putting her hand occasionally to her head, muttering ever "They say Philip's dead—maybe he is!"

## CHAPTER V.

Six or eight weeks had passed away since the *Garrick* landed her passengers on the quay of New York. Of the hundreds who had crossed the great sea within her "wooden walls" very few remained together. Scattered abroad over the face of the country they were lost sight of amid the surging waves of the population. Mrs. Walters was spending the winter with a friend in New York, whose house was located in the then fashionable Seventh Ward, somewhere about Madison street. The captain was, of course, gone back with the *Garrick*, and Bessy's duties, light in themselves, were made lighter still by the gentleness and goodness of her mistress. The lady of the house was a widow in good circumstances, with a large family, and there were three girls to do the work besides Bessy. There was also a colored man-servant who acted in the capacity of coachman, a groom was wholly unnecessary, as Mrs. Hibbard's horses boarded out, and her carriage, too, was kept at the Livery Stable. Altogether, it seemed a pleasant house to live in, and Bessy fancied she was going to find herself very comfortable and very much at home. Her comrade-girls, as she called them, welcomed her kindly, and cheered her heart with the assurance that they were all Irish and ever so glad to see her.

Only a few blocks from where Bessy lived, a little way up in Catherine street, there was a small store kept by one Michael Dooley, who had some five or six hands constantly at work in a little room behind the store. Amongst these might

be seen our friend, Paul Brannigan, plying the awl from morn till night, and after night, too, for it was the dull dark month of November. But Paul never tired of his work, and many a night he remained at it after hours when most of the others had gone home. What was the thought that made Paul's work so light to him, and kept him cheerful and contented and full of fun, as he sat hour after hour in that dark little shop? It was the thought that his labor was keeping the life in old Dolly Sheehan, and providing a shelter for her helpless ago. They had a little room to themselves in a tenement-house in Oliver street hard by, and the old woman was doing her best to keep Paul from feeling the want of a younger and more active housekeeper. Ever since she recovered from the first dreadful shock she seemed to attach herself wholly to Paul as the only person who had known Philip, and could speak to her of him. It was strange, however, that she never inquired as to the particulars of his death. She would talk of him for hours if Paul could only listen, retracing every circumstance connected with his early days, and dwelling with a mother's fondness on all his good qualities. Then she would ask Paul to tell her how Philip looked, what clothes he used to wear, and all such minute particulars concerning him, that the hunchback was sometimes puzzled how to answer her. Yet with all this, she never once put a question relating to his death. She saw that Paul avoided that part of the subject, and so did she, too, so that by a sort of tacit agreement, it was never alluded to in any way. This was a great relief to Paul's mind, for he had an idea that if the old woman knew how her son died it would certainly be the death of her. Many a time he said within himself: "Now, in case she *did* question me about it, and wouldn't be satisfied unless I told her, how on earth could I bring myself to do it? how could I tell her that her one son, the pulse of her heart, perished in the flames when the boat he was waiter in was burned on the Big Lakes? Now, Paul Brannigan, do you think you *could* tell her that? No,

indeed, nor the deuce a word of it. It's bad enough as it is, but *that* 'ld be worse than all. Well! at any rate if she *did* come too hard on me, I'd get Father Daly to tell her, an' she'd take it better from him than from me or anybody else."

Father Daly was staying for the present at the house of a college friend who was pastor of one of the city churches. When he presented himself to the bishop immediately after his arrival, the prelate was much prepossessed in his favor and promised to place him in the first vacancy that offered. He took a lively interest in the affairs of the acquaintances he had made on board the *Garrick*, but the dwarf and old Dolly were the special objects of his charitable solicitude. The heroic devotion with which Paul attached himself to the lone old woman whom he had, as it were, adopted as a mother, could not fail to inspire so good a priest with sentiments of respect for the little man. Accordingly he did hold him in high esteem, and took pleasure in drawing him out of the crusty shell of reserve which often grows over such natures under the keen sense of deformity.

Peery Murphy and his two sons after sundry disappointments and delays were at length all employed in one way or another, and Mary had got a situation as housemaid in a respectable family somewhere in Houston street. Mary's looks were much in her favor, and there was a certain air of smartness about her and also of neatness that made her a very promising servant. And the little damsel seemed fully aware of her personal advantages, judging by the self-sufficient smile that was generally seen on her pretty face. There was only another girl in the house where Mary lived, a staid elderly person who acted as cook and laundress. She was an American by birth and also by parentage, as she often boasted, and a Protestant, moreover, yet a very good girl in her way and disposed to do her duty as far as she knew it. Rebecca, or Becky as she was generally called, took quite an interest in the young Irish girl "just come out," and seeing that she was

naturally smart and intelligent, had great hopes of her doing well.

Ally Murphy—we beg her pardon—Mistress Finigan, was as yet staying with her mother, until such time as Ned could see his way before him and decide on what he was going to do. Ned was well disposed to take the world easy, and would rather live on his money awhile waiting for “something to turn up,” than go seek employment where he might possibly have harder work than he cared to undertake. He had already hunted up a number of people from his own place, and it was his pleasure to saunter around from one house to another asking advice from this one and that one regarding the best way to invest his money. Amongst other places, he frequented Paul Brannigan's room, and often dropped in of an evening “to have a chat.”

One evening about the middle of November he mounted as usual the three pairs of stairs leading to Paul's habitation, and nodding pleasantly to Paul and the old woman took his accustomed seat near the stove, and stretching his legs to their full length and thrusting his hands to the very bottom of his breeches-pockets, turned to Paul who had laid down on his entrance a well-worn copy of *Cobbett's Reformation*.

“Well, Paul!” said Ned in his cheerful way, “I b'lieve I'll be makin' a start one of these days.”

“How is that?”

“Well! I'm goin' to commence business.”

“Ay? and what business?”

“I was thinkin' of the liquor business. They tell me there's nothing like it here for makin' money, if a man has only enough to start it.”

“An' have you enough to start it?”

“Why, it doesn't take much to do that, by all accounts,” said Ned with an easy contented laugh. “If you have only a matter of twenty dollars or so you can go to a Mr. McRory that's in great business here—a fine Irishman they say he is—

and jist tell him what you want and pay him as far as your money goes, an' my dear! he'll set you up in elegant style, an' send you in kegs of all kinds of liquor; then you get some empty ones to fill up the shelves, and there you have a beautiful liquor store. Now, isn't that the greatest thing ever you heard, Paul? I'm sure you'd be a long day in Ireland before you'd find a man to do that much for you!"

"I'd be a long day anywhere," said Paul curtly, "for the reason that I wouldn't trouble any man to do it."

"You wouldn't? and why so?"

"Because it's a business I'd have nothing to do with. I'd rather go and break stones."

Ned laughed good-humoredly. "Ha! ha! ha! I'm thinkin' it isn't much stones *you'd* break. Howsomever, I'd like to know what you have to say again the liquor business, Paul? You can't deny but what it's an easy business, an' a money-makin' business, too—eh, Paul?"

"Well! I suppose it's what you say it is, Ned, but still it's a bad way of makin' a livin', an' the money that's made at it never wears well or does much good to them that has it."

"Ho! ho! ho! d'ye hear that, Mrs. Sheehan? Doesn't this man beat the world for gab! What do *you* think of it, ma'am?"

"Wisha, then, Mister Finigan," said old Dolly who sat on a low bench by the stove knitting a stocking, "wisha, then, dear knows it's a business I have neither love nor likin' for. I can't put words on it like Paul there, but to tell you the truth, I'd rather see you at anything else. That I mayn't sin but I would."

Ned still tried to laugh it off, but Paul straightened up his poor back as well as he could and laid his hand on the big man's knee and looked him in the face. "You don't heed what we say to you, Ned?" he asked very earnestly.

"Well! it doesn't signify what any one says," answered Ned carelessly, "for Ally and me have made up our minds about it, an' the store is taken, an' I was down this mornin' w'ith



Mister McRory, God bless him! an' he's goin' to send up the stock to-morrow or next day," and Ned raised his head still higher on the strength of *the stock* that was to be his, and looked exultingly from one to the other.

"If that's the case," said Paul, "I may as well hold my tongue, but still as you asked my opinion at the start, I'll give it to you now. I told you before that money made by sellin' liquor never wears well and sure that's no wonder, anyhow——"

"An' why *wouldn't* it wear well?" demanded Ned, a little ruffled or so at Paul's utter indifference to his new-blown honors, "why *wouldn't* it wear as well as any other?"

"Because there's a curse on it——"

"A curse! what curse?" said Ned starting to his feet.

"The curse of sin," returned the dwarf also rising, and looking up into Ned's face with the energy that marked his character; "what's the cause of the misery and the wickedness we see around us? Isn't it drunkenness, Ned, an' nothing else? When you see a naked, starved-lookin' creature of a man comin' in to take his glass, don't you know very well that the money he throws down on your counter has the curse of a heart-broken wife on it, an' that a whole family may be shiverin' with cold an' perishin' with hunger while that beast of a man is gettin' drunk on your *stock*, as you call it? Ah! that's the stock that brings down the wrath of God on them that sell it an' them that buy it—now, Ned, you're a God-fearin' man—I know that myself—an' so is your wife, too——"

"Another God-fearin' man," said Ned with a forced laugh.

"No matter, you know what I mean—well! I'm sure you'll not be long at the business till you find out that poor Paul Brannigan wasn't so far wrong after all. There's neither of you but 'ill find it hard work to be humorin' drunken men, an' waitin' on them at all hours, an' listenin' to their oaths and curses an' bad discourse of every kind——"

Old Dolly had dropped her knitting and sat with mouth and

eyes open listening entranced to Paul's scathing words. Ever and anon she nodded her head at Ned, as much as to say "That's the man for you!"

Ned himself was more deeply impressed by the dwarf's harangue than he chose to acknowledge, but he saw no use in giving in, as he said to himself, so he still tried to make a laughing matter of it.

"I wish to the Lord somebody had made a counsellor of you, Paul," he said with well-feigned good humor; "only for the hump you'd have made a tarnation fine priest, but if you had got learnin' for a counsellor now, I'm thinkin' Dan himself couldn't hold a candle to you. But I was forgettin' entirely what brought me here. Did you see or hear anything of Herbert since he came to New York?"

"Not much, he was into the store where I was once or twice, and the last time he said he was goin' to Boston to an uncle of his that's very rich there."

"How long is that ago?"

"Well! it's about a month or five weeks."

"Humph! I'm thinkin' he hasn't left New York—if he's a livin' man I seen him last night."

"You don't say so, Ned?"

"But I do! Ally an' her mother an' myself were comin' along down the Bowery from Houston street where we were up seein' Mary, an' just as we got to the corner of Prince street (I think it was), who should step out to us but Herbert, and he passed me as close as what you are now."

"Had he any one with him?"

"Oh, then, indeed he had a fine tall gentleman dressed like the lord of the land, an', my dears! you'd think the two were hand an' glove together, for they were talkin' like fifty, an' so much taken up with their own discourse that Herbert never noticed one of us, though I don't know how he could miss seein' us."

"What kind of a place did he come out of?"

"Well! the sorra one of me knows—there was nothing in it that I could see but tables and chairs and them big screens they have in public houses here."

"Humph! a saloon, I suppose," said Paul thoughtfully. "Well! well! let him go, as long as he keeps out of *our* way, let him 'follow his old vagary still.' You don't think he has found Bessy out—do you?"

"Well! indeed, that's more than I can tell you, for Bessy and I are not the best of friends, and I don't go next or near her."

Paul said no more on the subject, and Ned soon after went away, tramp, tramp, down the three pairs of stairs, whistling "The Dusty Miller." That same evening Bessy Conway was called to the hall-door to see a gentleman.

"A gentleman! my goodness! what gentleman wants to see me?" As Bessy left the room flurried and excited she caught Mrs. Walters' significant glance, and scarce knowing what she did she turned back.

"I'm sure it's *him*, Mrs. Walters! I'm sure it is. What in the world will I do?"

"I will tell you that," said her mistress who really pitied her distress; "if you wish to put an end to all this, suffer me to go in your stead. I will dismiss him sooner than you could."

"Oh! ma'am dear, if you'll only do that!" cried Bessy clasping her hands, "it'll be the best thing you ever done for me!"

Down stairs tripped Mrs. Walters, and in the hall she found Henry Herbert looking as dark as possible.

"Mr. Herbert," said the lady, after returning his haughty bow, "was it my servant you wished to see—if so, you should have applied at the basement door."

"Madam!" said Herbert with an angry flush on his cheek, "I am not accustomed to apply at basement doors."

"I may be, sir, but if you have business with any of the

servants it is there you must see them, not here. But now that you *are* here, Mr. Herbert, allow me to ask what your business is with Bessy? You will pardon the liberty I take, but as I have mainly induced the girl to leave her parents, I consider myself bound to supply their place in her regard."

"Oh! of course, of course!" said Herbert, with some embarrassment, "that is understood, but still I can hardly recognize your right to question *me*. I do not intend to run away with Bessy—is that a satisfactory answer?"

"No, Mr. Herbert!" replied Mrs. Walters very gravely, "it is not satisfactory, and I wish you to understand that Bessy Conway, being under my protection, must not be exposed to uncharitable remarks. You know what I mean!"

"I do perfectly, madam, but I wish you in return to understand that I am free to go *where* I please and visit *who* I please."

"I am then reduced to the necessity of forbidding you this house," said Mrs. Walters with more determination than one would expect from her usually gentle manner; "I shall give orders at once to that effect."

"In that case, madam," said Herbert going to the door, "I must only try to see Bessy by other means—that is, if I *desire* to see her. Good evening, Mrs. Walters!"

"Mr. Herbert!" said the lady moving a step or two nearer him, "you are, then, bent on justifying all the evil things I heard said of you?"

"Evil things!" repeated Herbert with a look of surprise and alarm. "What did you hear, then?"

"Nothing in particular, but a great deal in general. For myself I hoped and do still hope better things of you, Mr. Herbert—see that you do not deceive my expectations!"

Herbert eagerly approached her, his whole face lit up with a new feeling of satisfaction. "Did you say you had hopes of me, Mrs. Walters? That you did not,—do not believe what you heard of me?"

"I have told you so," said Mrs. Walters much surprised by his sudden change of manner.

"Then, upon my word and honor, madam, your good opinion shall not be thrown away. It is something to know that one pure, and good, and generous as you still entertains hopes of me. Adieu, Mrs. Walters!" and taking her hand he bowed respectfully over it. "Your charity makes me think better of mankind, and it may be that you have saved me from ruin. Be so good as to tell Bessy that I will not forget her, but that I will trouble her no more till—till—oh! I cannot say when!"

He opened the door very quickly and was gone before Mrs. Walters had recovered sufficiently from her surprise to attempt an answer. Slowly she retraced her way up stairs, thinking of what she should say to Bessy, and wondering whether Herbert would keep his word.

"Was it Mr. Herbert, ma'am?" said Bessy timidly, after waiting a little to see if her mistress would give the information voluntarily.

"It was, Bessy," Mrs. Walters replied, "but I trust we have seen the last of him. I gave him to understand very plainly that as you cannot receive his visits without impropriety, he cannot be allowed to continue them."

"And what did he say, ma'am?"

"Oh! he said what I took for a promise that he would trouble you no more."

Mrs. Walters was much relieved when Bessy clasped her hands and fervently thanked God. "And I'm thankful to you, too, Mrs. Walters," she added with unmistakeable sincerity, her eyes full of tears, "I'm thankful for the trouble you have taken—you don't know how glad I am!"

A little while after Bessy descended to the kitchen and was surprised to find all there in an uproar. Cook, housemaid, and nurse, were talking at the top of their voice, while Wash, the colored man, sat grinning in a corner enjoying the fun.

Bessy had no time to inquire the meaning of what she saw,

for she was instantly appealed to by Sally, the housemaid, who was dressed for going out. "Now, Bessy, a'nt this too bad ?—a'nt it?"

"I say it's *mean*"—cried the cook much excited.

"What is it?" slipped in Bessy.

"Why, only think!"—exclaimed Sally, with a very emphatic gesture, "here am I dressed to go out, and Mrs. Hibbard sends down word that I can't go this evening."

"And her evening out!" put in the nurse.

"And her beau coming to take her to a dance!" said cook.

"Guess Jim won't like it," said darkey maliciously; "shouldn't wonder if he took another gal for spite."

"He a'nt going to have the chance," said Sally, drawing on her light kid glove with a very determined air; "I'll go if I lose my place for it. I a'nt so green that folks can treat me so," and she shook out the folds of her plaid silk dress as though it were a flag of defiance. "A nice thing indeed to be told that you can't go out, when you've had the trouble of dressing."

"But, dear me!" said Bessy, when she could get in a word, "why didn't you ask leave to go out *before* you dressed?"

"Ask leave indeed!" repeated Sally with a disdainful toss of her head; "I tell you it's my evening out, and if Mrs. Hibbard expects company, Ellen can do what is to be done." Ellen was silent but Bessy spoke.

"Why, how can Ellen be down stairs, Sally? don't you know Miss Lizzy is very sick, and the poor child doesn't like to be left alone?"

"Well! it a'nt any matter about that, I'm going out if Jim comes!"

"I would, if I was you!" said cook. "I'd let them see that I'd have my rights!"

"Sartin!" chimed in Wash with his broad grin; "I go in for having one's rights! This is a free country!"

While Bessy was examining with curious eyes the various

gew-gaws which went to make up Sally's flaunting attire, a knock came to the basement door, and the parlor bell rang at the same moment.

Wash hastening to the door ushered into the kitchen a strapping young man with a huge black moustache, who proved to be the identical Jim for whom Sally was waiting. Whilst greetings were exchanged all round, the bell rang again and great excitement followed.

"There now! who is to answer the bell?" said cook.

"Why, Ellen, who else?" said Sally.

"Well, but, what will I say if she asks why *you* didn't come?" said Ellen to Sally.

Before Sally could answer Mrs. Hibbard's voice was heard on the basement stairs. "Are you all asleep here, or what is the matter?" She came to the kitchen-door and looked in. "Why, Ellen, I thought you were in the nursery. That poor sick child ought not to be left alone."

Ellen disappeared.

"But, Sally!" said Mrs. Hibbard, "you are not going out, are you, after the message I sent you?"

Whatever Sally might have done at another time, she certainly would not give in before Jim. "I guess I am, Mrs. Hibbard!" she said with unblinking confidence, "it's my evening out, you know!"

"Yes, but I want you in the house!"

"I can't help that, Mrs. Hibbard! you might have told me before."

"I thought it unnecessary to tell you to stay in this evening for I thought you knew that I expected company. Ellen having the children to see to cannot wait on the door, or the company either, and Bridget has her own work to do in the kitchen."

"Well, Mrs. Hibbard! it a'n't any use talking—my brother has come after me and go I must. Come along, Jim! I guess mother will be most frozen waiting for us."

Jim looked at Wash and stroked down his black moustache, and Wash put his finger to his flat nose with sly meaning.

"Very well, Sally!" said Mrs. Hibbard as she left the kitchen, "you need not return here to-night. Come to-morrow for your things, and I will pay you—*what I owe you.*" There was a meaning in the last words that Sally alone understood. Mrs. Hibbard did not owe her one cent. Her last month's wages hung on the back of her head in the shape of a stylish bonnet. Still she would have "the bully word."

"You needn't a told me to leave, Mrs. Hibbard," she said sailing out of the kitchen with Jim in tow; "it a'nt hard to get a better place than yours!"

Mrs. Hibbard walked up stairs after telling Bessy that she would ask Mrs. Walters to allow her to take Sally's place that evening.

"By Gosh!" said Wash, shaking his woolly head very gravely, "by Gosh! I tink Sally's a knocking her head agin de wall dis time!—hu! hu! hu!"

Bessy had been a silent and curious witness of this scene. She looked and listened like one in a dream. When the kitchen was again quiet, she said in an absent way as if following the train of her own thoughts:

"My goodness! isn't Sally the queer girl all out?"

"What do you say that for?" demanded cook sharply.

"Why, sure no one in their senses would go on that way. What right had she to go out when her mistress wanted her in the house?"

"What right had she?" exclaimed Bridget placing her arms a-kimbo; "why, she had *every* right!—didn't you hear that it was her evening to go out?"

"To be sure I heard it," Bessy replied very gently, "but what of that? Couldn't she stay at home for this one evening? Maybe she'd be better off if she staid in *every* evening."

"That's nothing," said Bridget, "a bargain's a bargain, and



I guess I'd have told Mrs. Hibbard her own if I was in Sally's place. I wouldn't have let her off so easy! Company indeed! it's bothered we are with her old company!"

"Well, Bridget! after that," began Bessy, but the door-bell rang at the moment, and she ran up stairs to answer it, saying to herself as she hurried along the hall: "Are they losin' their senses, or what's the matter with them at all?"

Next day towards evening when Sally came for her clothes she appeared a different person altogether. It was a dreary, drizzling day, and she looked cold and miserable. Having got her things together she brought them down to the kitchen, and, drawing a chair in front of the bright cheerful fire, commenced a whispered colloquy with Bridget, who sat picking feathers near the range.

"What on earth am I to do," said Sally, "I haven't got but fifty cents in the world, and I must give that to the man in the office!"

"A'nt there anything coming to you here?"

"Not a red cent. Do you think you could lend me a dollar or two till such times as I get a place?"

"I wish to God I could, Sally, but you know I sent home all I could scrape together last week."

"Lord bless me! what will I do, at all? Do you think Mrs. Hibbard would take me back?"

"I'm sure I don't know. You might try her, anyhow."

A bright thought struck Sally, and up stairs she went, on and on till she came to Mrs. Walters' room, where she knocked at the door, and was admitted by Bessy, who looked at her with surprise.

"Dear me! what is she about?" thought Bessy, as she cast her eyes compassionately over her draggled apparel.

The object of Sally's visit was to solicit Mrs. Walters' intercession with her justly-offended mistress.

"Well, really, Sally!" said Mrs. Walters very gravely, "I

can hardly make up my mind to do it. I am sorry for you—very sorry indeed—but from what Mrs. Hibbard told me, I think you were very much to blame. You had a good place of it here, and you have lost it by your own fault. What dependence could Mrs. Hibbard ever place in you after your conduct of last night?"

"Well, ma'am," said Sally with a very humble, penitent air, "if Mrs. Hibbard will only forgive me this once, I will promise never to do so again. Won't you ask her, Mrs. Walters? I'll just tell you the truth, ma'am! I han't got any money to pay my board."

"You should have thought of that in time," said Mrs. Walters, but her kind heart was touched, and she told Sally to go down stairs and wait. She would go and speak to Mrs. Hibbard and see what could be done. Depending on Sally's promises, her mistress took her back at Mrs. Walter's request to give her another trial.

Bessy saw and heard all this, and she laid it up in her heart as a useful lesson.

## CHAPTER VI.

For a short time all went on well in Mrs. Hibbard's household, and Sally was ever so attentive to her duties. She had received a civil hint from her mistress that brothers with black moustaches were not at all desirable about the kitchen. "You have sufficient opportunity to see your friends, both male and female, having Thursday evening to yourself, and also every second Sunday afternoon—let that suffice, for I really cannot allow you to see your company in my kitchen."

Sulky and silent Sally flounced out of the room, but when she got to the lower regions she made ample amends for the temporary restraint she had imposed upon herself.

"Well there!" said she in a towering passion, flinging down her dustpan and brush on the table where Bridget was preparing something for the oven, "well there! if that a'nt the meanest thing!"

"What place is that for your dustpan and brush?" cried Bridget, and she in her turn flung them on the floor.

"I don't care a snap," went on Sally, "I say I won't put up with it!"

"Dear me, Sally, what's the matter?" said Bessy, who chanced to be present.

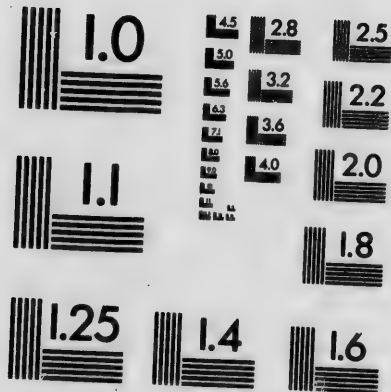
"What's wrong with you *now*?" said Bridget.

"Why, she's just after telling me we can't have folks come to see us here any more—especially '*male relations*,'" and she mimicked Mrs. Hibbard's voice to such perfection that



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Bridget laughed heartily. "She says we can see them when we go out. No thanks to her for that! I tell you I'm real mad!"

"That's all along of *your* carrying on!" said Bridget angrily, "it was your sa'ce that did it, and now other folks must suffer for your doings! Well! I an't a-going to tell *my* beau any such a thing. Let her tell him herself if she has a mind to, and I shan't stay another hour in her house after it. I an't a greenhorn to let folks walk right over me. I know my rights, and I'll have them, too, and if she says one word to Tom next time he comes, won't she catch it?"

Bridget was just as angry as Sally, and both talking at the top of their voice it was a perfect confusion of tongues.

One thing, however, was sufficiently plain to Bessy, namely, that the knight of the black moustache was no brother of Sally's. As soon as she could edge in a word she ventured to say, "Why, I thought that was your brother that came for you the other night——"

"Brother, indeed!" said both in a breath, "just as if folks minded brothers!"

"But why did you tell Mrs. Hibbard he was, Sally?"

"Shut up!" cried Sally, "it an't any business of yours!—what does a greenhorn like you know?"

Bessy, of course, gave in that she knew nothing, and was right glad to escape to her own part of the house. Mrs. Walters saw that she looked flurried and asked what was the matter.

"Not Mr. Herbert again, I hope?"

"Lord bless me, no, ma'am!—its only the girls below that I may say hunted me out of the kitchen just for one word I said, and I'm sure I had no harm *in* it either!"

Mrs. Walter smiled. "Oh! if that be all, Bessy, I am well content. You will soon learn to hold your own with them."

"Well! I don't know, ma'am," said Bessy with a puzzled air, "I'm afeard that's what I'll never do." She was thinking

of another day when she had taken a strong pair of boots of her mistress down stairs to polish, when Bridget and Sally both fell upon her. One asked what business she had cleaning boots in *her* kitchen, and the other took her to task for doing them at all, telling her it was the likes of her that spoiled ladies, doing what they had no right to do. Couldn't she leave them for Wash? Yes, but her mistress was going out and wanted the boots and Wash was not in. No matter, she must not attempt to come there again to clean boots, if she wanted so bad to make herself busy and do dirty work, she might do it up stairs in her own place—that was all. With this fresh in her mind Bessy answered her mistress in a very desponding tone, but still she could not bring herself to tell matters in their worst light.

Sunday came round at last, and somehow Bessy thought the week had been long, long in passing. She had asked Mrs. Walters over night what hour would be most convenient for her to go to Mass, and agreeable to her instructions, went to eight o'clock Mass in St. James's Church. On her return she found a storm raging down stairs. Bridget was alarmingly hurried *trying* to get the breakfast and scolding might and main because Sally wasn't in to help her.

"What's the matter, Bridget?" inquired Bessy with her sweetest smile.

"Oh! it's easy for you to say that," snapped Bridget, "it's well for you folks that can get out when you please, here's myself working like a nigger to get breakfast for you all, and Mrs. Hibbard is angry because it an't in sooner."

"What Mass did you go to?" said Bessy, naturally supposing that she had got in too late.

"Mass indeed! how would *I* get to Mass! don't you think I've enough to do to see to the breakfast. Half-past eight soon comes these short mornings."

"But my goodness! why didn't you get up and go to six o'clock Mass?" said Bessy in utter amazement; "you'd have

been back at seven, and have plenty of time to do your work."

"Nonsense! child, don't be talking like a fool! How could I be getting up of a morning like this in time to go out at six? I tell you it a'nt *possible* for anybody in this kitchen to get out at all to Mass!"

"But didn't I hear you saying before now that there's Mass in St. Mary's Church in Grand street at nine o'clock?"

"I guess there is."

"Couldn't you try, then, and go to that? when breakfast is at half-past eight, I'm sure you could."

Bridget, driven to extremity, turned sharp round at last. "Will you not be botherin' me, Bessy Conway? Mind your own business, and maybe you'll find it enough! God doesn't expect impossibilities!"

"Oh! I know that well, glory be to His name!" said Bessy, "but it's not an impossibility for *you* to hear Mass—I think it's your own fault if you don't!"

This made Bridget furious. "I vow to God I'll scald you," she almost shrieked; "if you're wise you'll get out of my way! do you think I have nothing else to do but listen to your chat?"

"Well! well! Bridget, I'll say no more," said Bessy mildly, "I suppose Sally is out?"

"I guess *she's* gone to St. Mary's," said Bridget, a little mollified by Bessy's gentleness; "she went out just before *you* came in."

"Why, she'll be too late even for *nine*, then?"

"That's her own business," retorted Bridget, "not yours or mine. There! if I wasn't near scalding myself badly—now just get along up stairs, will you? That's all your doings!"

This new version of the wolf and the lamb of course sent Bessy up stairs without further delay, and she vowed that it would be a long day before she undertook to admonish Bridget again. She could not help reasoning with herself on what was



to her so passing strange. "Now," thought she, "isn't it curious? For the little I've seen of Bridget, I really think she's an honest, decent girl, for all her bad temper, and then see how she sends so much of her earnings home to her mother, still she thinks nothing of losing Mass on a Sunday! Well! God help her! more's the pity!"

It appeared that Bridget complained to Sally on her return that Bessy had been making herself busy in their affairs, whereupon Sally took the first opportunity of rating her soundly.

"Now I'm just going to give you one advice, Bessy!" said she when, the family and Mrs. Walters being gone to Church, they found themselves alone together up stairs. "As long as you and I are in one house, don't ever dare to pass any remarks on me, whether I go to Mass or not. I guess you won't have to answer for my soul, so it an't any business of yours!"

"Well, but, Sally," said Bessy kindly and soothingly, "between ourselves, now, isn't it a great sin, ay! and a great shame to be so careless about hearing Mass on Sunday, when you know the obligation that's on you?"

At this Sally turned and fixed her eyes disdainfully on Bessy.

"I guess there are some folks that never lose Mass that a'n't any better than other folk that a'n't so very partic'lar. But to be sure it's a fine thing for a girl living out to have *gentlemen*," laying a bitter emphasis on the word, "coming to see her! I guess we a'n't blind anyhow—we've got eyes as well as others, and can see folks parading up and down in front of the house most every evening—ha! ha! that brings the blood to your face!—you see folks here are wide awake, Bessy Conway, so you'd better look out for what concerns yourself, and let others alone!" She flounced away with her broom in her hand, and banged a neighboring door after her.

Bessy was, indeed, startled by what she had heard. Was Herbert still keeping her in mind, then, and haunting like a

ghost on her account the house which he might not enter? There was something in the thought that pleased her she dared not think why, though it grieved her, too, to find that "the landlord's son" was still making so little of himself and the people he belonged to.

In the afternoon she got leave from her mistress to go out, and after Vespers she thought she would go and see how Mrs. Sheehan was getting on. She found the old woman all alone and saying her beads, while her plaintive moans and the tears that streamed profusely from her eyes showed that Philip's eternal weal was the object of her supplication.

Bessy paused at the door and peeped in. Deeply touched by the sight of the old woman's grief, and respecting her pious occupation, she hesitated whether to go in or not, but the sound of a heavy foot on the stairs behind decided her at once and in she went with the old familiar greeting, "God save all here."

"God save you kindly!" said Dolly, crossing herself with her beads, and rising with the aid of a chair at which she had been kneeling. She did not at first recognize her visitor, and raised her hand to shade her tear-dimmed eyes as she peered into the smiling face before her. At last Bessy laughed out and asked did she not know her.

"Why, dear bless me! is it you, Bessy Conway? Wisha, then, but I'm overjoyed to see you. Sit down, alanna ma-chree! and take an air of the fire."

Bessy did so, and asked how Paul was.

"He's well, I'm obliged to you—but, indeed, I'm afeard he's workin' too hard. It comes heavy on the creature to pay for the room and keep two of us up—it makes myself ashamed, so it does! for sure I know well enough I'm a heavy burthen on him, poor man!"

"You *would* be, supposin' I had you on my back," said Paul himself as he stumped into the room, "'deed you would, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am! on account of the load I have on it

already. Why, Bessy Conway! is this yourself? how does the world use you these times?"

"Well! I can't complain, Paul! I'd be well off entirely if I only had my people near me, but it's a lonesome thing to be among strangers; no matter how good they are still you can't open your mind to them and make free with them as you would with your own."

"True for you, ma colleen dhas!" said old Dolly with great feeling.

"What about Master Henry?" asked Paul in a low voice.

"What about him, Paul?" said Bessy in some alarm; "why, what do I know about him?"

"You never see him, then?"

"No more than I see them that's in Ireland! Do you—do you ever see him yourself any time?" she added with some hesitation.

"Of an odd time I do," said Paul elevating his eyebrows with a comical gesture; "he's mighty bad with an old complaint that follied him at home."

"An old complaint!" cried Bessy, her cheek pale as ashes; "Lord bless me! what is it?"

"Oh! it's one that won't kill him—don't be afeard!" said Paul coolly and with keen irony; "all the doctors in New York couldn't cure him—no, nor you either, Bessy Conway! for he had it long before ever he seen you!"

Bessy's face was covered with blushes at this broad hint "Me cure him! why, Lord bless me, Paul! what virtue have I to cure any one!—sure enough you're the quarest man livin'." Then disguising her emotion, she said with a view to change the subject:

"How is Ned Finigan doin',—and the Murphys?"

"All well, and doing well—'like the people in America,' as they used to say at home. Ned has a fine liquor store of it somewhere about Prince street, I b'lieve they're goin' to have a dance there soon for a house-warming."

"I must go and see them next Sunday if I get out," said Bessy, "but I wanted to call and see Mary Murphy the day, for she was up two or three times to see *me*. God be with you all till I see you again!"

"I say, Bessy!" said Paul hurrying after her to the stairs, and raising himself on his toes to get to her ear, "take care of them you know!"

"Why, botheration to you, Paul! was that all you had to say?" and Bessy ran down stairs in a real or pretended pout, the dwarf's discordant laugh ringing in her ears till she reached the door.

"Ah, then, now," said she to herself as she hurried along the narrow, crowded side-walk in the direction of Chatham square, "ah, then, now, isn't it a hard case that he's a-throwing in my face go where I will, an' me never sees a sight of him. It's no wonder I was afeard of remarks bein' passed, for I see I can't escape people's tongues as long as himself and me are in the same city." And the tears rushed to her eyes. She hastily raised her gloved hand to wipe them away, when a well-known voice accosted her with:

"Bessy! my poor Bessy! what's the matter?" The words were almost spoken in a whisper, but Bessy heard every syllable, and she feared to raise her eyes or give any sign of recognition, for she knew it was Henry Herbert that spoke, and she began to have an instinctive notion that prying eyes were ever upon her, and ears ever open to find pretence for insinuation.

"Go away for God's sake!" she said without looking up, and she walked on faster than ever.

"Are you almost tired of service yet?" said the soothing voice again, and still at her side.

"No, no, if *you'd* only let me alone. For the love of Heaven, go away, or I'm ruined entirely. You don't know what I have to suffer on account of you!"

"Never mind, Bessy! you'll get over it all—I don't pity you now, though, for the fault is your own!"

Involuntarily she raised her eyes to his face, and she thought it was paler and thinner than usual. Paul's words immediately occurred to her, and she forgot for a moment her own concerns in anxiety for his health.

"Dear me! Master Henry! I'm afeard there's something the matter with you. It's true enough, then, what Paul said?"

"What Paul said? What did he say?" demanded Herbert quickly, and if his face was pale before it was red enough then.

"What did he tell you, Bessy?"

"Why nothing that was any harm, Master Henry, so don't be angry!"

"What did he say? Let me hear it at once!"

"Bless me! he only said that you were troubled with an old complaint of yours since you came to New York! I'm sure that was no harm."

Herbert laughed scornfully. "Oh! of course not. But what complaint did he say it was?"

"Well! he didn't mention any in particular—he only said that it was one the doctors couldn't cure—I suppose he meant the doctors here!" she added by way of apology, but glancing timidly up in Herbert's face, she shuddered to see the dark scowl that was on his brow. His eyes were like living coals and his thin lips drawn off the teeth with a strange and ghastly smile.

"Don't mind him, Bessy!" he said with an absent air, as though he half forgot her presence, "he did but jest—go home, Bessy! it isn't well for you to be abroad after dark. I do not offer to accompany you, for I know it would only frighten you if I did. But go home, I charge you, Bessy! lest evil come upon you. Such wickedness as you never dreamed of roams abroad here under cover of the night."

They had crossed the square by this time, and reached the corner of Division street, Bessy forgetting in her bewilderment

that she and Herbert were walking side by side. All at once the impropriety of the thing occurred to her mind and she stopped. "For the Lord's sake, Master Henry, go away from me! I'll never open my lips to you, if you come a step farther——"

"I'll go, I'll go—but just tell me where *are you* going?"

"I intended to go to Houston street to see Mary Murphy, but I'll not go now, it's getting so late."

"That's right—go home as fast as you can. Ha!" he muttered as the girl turned to retrace her steps across the square, "ha! there was no time to lose!—my poor Bessy!"

He stood looking after her a moment with a softened expression, then cast his eyes anxiously on a tall personage who had just turned the opposite corner from Catherine street. It appeared this individual had caught a glimpse of Bessy's pretty face as she passed under the lamp, and on reaching the corner he turned and walked rapidly after her. Herbert hoped for a moment that Bessy was not the object of the man's pursuit, but he hoped in vain, for she had not gone many yards across the square when he saw him accost her, bending down to peep under her bonnet with an impertinent stare. The girl's exclamation of alarm was plainly heard by Herbert for he was already close behind, and the next moment he laid his hand on the man's arm.

"I say, Dixon, let that girl alone!" he said in a low but determined tone. The other turned on hearing his name, and a sinister smile gleamed across his sallow features.

"Ho! he, Herbert! is it you! Am I trespassing, eh? By Jupiter! I admire your taste!—where did you pick *her* up?"

"Take care what you say, Dixon?" said Herbert, and he blushed like a young girl, "you're altogether mistaken—come this way, I have something to tell you!" It needed not the imperative gesture which he made to induce Bessy to hurry away as fast as her feet would carry her.

It was hard to say at the moment which was uppermost in

her mind—gratitude to Herbert, or sorrow to find him on familiar terms with a person who, even to her inexperienced eye, seemed anything but a good companion. Even the one glance she had dared to take at his face showed “a laughing devil in his sneer” and a look in his great black eyes that she could not think of without a shudder.

“My goodness!” said she to herself, “how did Master Henry fall in with such company as that? I’m afraid—I’m afraid he’s foolish for himself.”

She sighed heavily as this idea presented itself to her mind, for she was thinking of the anxious care with which he had been urging her to go home before the evening advanced farther.

“He wishes *me* well, at any rate,” she said to herself; “I wish to goodness he was only half as particular in regard to himself. Well! well! I suppose it can’t be helped, but I hope in God he’ll not be troublin’ *me* any more!”

Well pleased to find herself at home again, she opened the area gate and was going to knock at the basement door when plump she came in the dark archway against some one standing there. The exclamation of surprise that escaped her was stifled by a hand laid on her mouth, and a voice which she knew to be Sally’s whispered: “Hush—hush! not a word for your life!”

“Oh! it’s you, Sally! Well! I’m sure, if you didn’t take a start out of me!”

“Push the door and go in!” said the whispered voice again.

Bessy did so, wondering much at Sally’s standing out of doors such a night as that. As she closed the door the light from the hall fell upon a face with a black moustache and a pair of sharp eyes that certainly did not belong to Sally.

Deeming it the best of her play to take no notice, Bessy passed on up stairs, but just glanced into the kitchen where Wash was cleaning knives and Bridget making some biscuit for tea. Both appeared much heated, which was not sur-

prising, for they had been discussing certain points of morality in connection with religion, and the subject being an exciting one they had grown quite hot upon it, Bridget, of course, having the best of the argument as far as talk went.

Wash was not slow in appealing to Bessy as one who ought to know. The point under discussion was whether people did not pay to go to confession, or as Wash phrased it, "to get whitewashed."

"Why nonsense, Wash," said Bessy very seriously, "what puts the like of that in your head?"

"By Gosh, it's true enough," said the nigger with a grave shake of the head, "didn't I hear Rose Hagerty ask Missis for money to go to confession."

"Now, Bessy, how can we stand that?" said Bridget with a wrathful look at Wash. "There's a story for you!"

"Guess, I didn't make it," returned the nigger, "Rose knew what she was about well as most people, and I hear her say dat ever so often just wat I tell you. 'Spose the priest don't charge much for lying or stealing."

This home-thrust made Bridget wince. "You black devil," she said with rising choler, "you don't mean to say any one here does one or the other?"

"Can't say, Bridget," returned Wash with provoking coolness; "it an't far from stealing to throw good bread in the dirt-box and butter in the grease-pot. Den for lies—gosh!" and he chuckled to himself at the thought, "golly! I hear as many told in dis kitchen as would fill a barrel!—"

Bridget was speechless with anger, but Bessy assured the old man that no one ever paid anything for going to confession, adding that those who were capable of making such an assertion seldom troubled a priest at all.

"If they went to confession regularly," said she, "as they ought to do, Wash! you'd never see them wasteful or extravagant about other people's things, or makin' free in any way with what didn't belong to them—no, nor you'd never hear



them speakin' anything but the truth, or askin' for money to go to confession."

Bessy waited for no more, but hurried off up stairs vexed with herself for having delayed so long. At the same moment Mrs. Hibbard made her appearance from the dining-room, which, as in most American houses, was on the basement floor.

"Well!" said she, "I have just heard what passed here on the subject of confession, and from my experience I should say Bessy is right. Those girls of whom you spoke, Wash, were about the most unprincipled that I ever had in my house. In fact I had reason to know afterwards that on some of these occasions when they asked money for going to confession on Saturday afternoon, it was to a dance-house or low tavern they went for an evening's amusement. Where is Sally?"

Wash looked at Bridget and Bridget looked at Wash. They would have been in a sad quandary as to what they should say, (fearing Sally's vengeance in case they told the truth,) when luckily for them she appeared to answer for herself.

"Where have you been, Sally?"

"Up with Ellen in the nursery, ma'am."

"Dear me! you look as cold as though you had been out of doors."

"It's a bad cold I have, Mrs. Hibbard."

"You should take something for it—some hot gruel going to bed." And the lady returned to the dining-room where the family were assembling for supper.

"Hot gruel—ahem!" and Sally coughed affectedly, whereupon Bridget was seized with a fit of laughing. To mark her appreciation of the joke she gave Sally a thump on the back. Wash was going to remonstrate, but received peremptory orders to "shut up," and did so accordingly as in duty bound.

## CHAPTER VII.

PAUL BRANNIGAN was in no hurry, it would seem, to avail himself of Ned Finigan's invitation to call and see "the mistress," for five, six, eight weeks had passed away since *THE CASTLE INN* by E. FINIGAN was first descried in yellow letters on a blue swinging sign in a street not far from Prince street, and yet Paul had never once crossed the threshold. Whether it was on this account, or from the pressure of business attending a dashing "opening," Ned's visits to the tenement house in Oliver street were discontinued, and so it was that Paul and he had not seen each other for the space of time mentioned.

One cold frosty evening towards the end of January, Ned was standing behind the counter dealing out a something which he called *brandy* to three men whose begrimed faces indicated craftsmen, most probably workers in iron. These were taking "a standing dram" and as yet they were sober, but from the room adjoining the shop came sounds which indicated that men were there who had taken *more* than "a standing dram." Paul Brannigan shuddered as the sounds from within smote his ear and he shrank back in disgust from the fumes of whiskey and tobacco which filled the place, but he wanted to speak with Ned and so made up his mind to wait awhile in hopes that "mine host" would be disengaged. Not sorry to perceive that his entrance was unnoticed by Ned, he quietly retired to a corner where a low bench ran along the wall, and there established himself for the purpose of general observa-

tion. He soon found that Ned's brandy was working wonders on the men at the bar. The calm and rational way in which they had been talking very soon gave way to louder tones and more excited gestures, together with a certain incoherence of sense which struck Paul forcibly. As their heads grew muddled their hearts grew softer; sundry expressions of good-will were exchanged, and hands were shook ever so often with wonderful cordiality. They waxed generous, too, and must needs treat the landlord, ay! every one of them, for sure when one asked Ned to drink, another could be no worse, and, of course, Ned could refuse none without giving offence. So he took a small drop with each, just for good-fellowship, cracking jokes the while with a fullness of good humor and pleasantry that won all hearts and went to establish his character as "a real jolly fellow."

Meanwhile others came in, some passing on into the room, some taking their stand at the counter. What with the influx of customers and the silver stream flowing therefrom into his drawer, and the various "treats" which he had been sharing, Ned was growing quite merry on it, and his big heart expanding in the warmth of the hour, he talked right and left with a superabundance of cordiality that would have been quite refreshing had his entertainment been nowise connected with dollars and cents.

Very soon Ally had to be sent for to lend a hand at the bar, and Paul could hardly believe his eyes when he saw her in the full glory of artificial flowers, and ribbons, and lace, looking as consequential as that "Woman of Three Cows" famed in Irish song. Still Mistress Finigan was not above her business, it would seem, with all her fine dress, for she went to work with right good will to serve the customers in waiting. Her quick eye was not slow in perceiving Paul, and her exclamation of friendly recognition made Ned aware of the hunchback's presence.

"So you've come at last," he said in a voice which somehow

sounded unfamiliar to Paul's ear; "well! it was most time, but no matter for that, I'm glad to see you here. Come over and have something to drink!"

"I don't wish for anything at the present time," said Paul, "I thank you all the same, though."

"Hut tut, man, the night's cold and raw, you'll be the better of a drop to warm you."

"Well, do you know, Ned, I never take liquor to warm me, for I have a notion it only makes one feel the cold more afterwards."

"Well! honest man," said one of those at the counter, as he turned a curious look on Paul, "I'd be loath to say you were a fool, but, upon my credit, you're not as wise as you look. Here's to your good health and a better understanding to you."

"I'm entirely obliged to you," answered Paul gravely; "they say every fool thinks himself the wisest, and maybe I'm foolish enough to be of the same notion."

"Ha! ha! Tommy!" said one of the other men with a good-natured laugh, "I'm afeard you happened on an edged tool this time. Hurry up, now, and let us be off."

"How is Mrs. Sheehan!" said Ally, addressing Paul across the counter.

"Well, then, she's only middlin' these days, Mrs. Finigan! She's bothered entirely dreamin' of Philip."

While Ned was enlightening some of the men on the nature of the connection between Paul and Mrs. Sheehan, one who had not yet spoken turned his head quickly: "Philip!" he repeated, "Mrs. Sheehan!—who are they?"

"Friends of mine!" said the little man shortly, with a look that meant "what's that to you?"

"Well! but I've a reason for asking who they are," said the other, whose name was Cassidy; "where is *your* Philip Sheehan now?"

"He's where God pleases," said Paul still in the same curt manner, and looking him full in the face.

"Tell a fool that!" said Cassidy, "but I want to know is he living or dead?"

"He's dead, then! will that please you?"

Cassidy smiled. "It will, but it'll please me better if you'll tell me something more about it."

Paul was just coming out with another short answer, but Ned interposed. "Don't mind Paul, Mr. Cassidy, he has a mighty droll way with him, and a body that didn't know him might think he was downright in earnest sometimes when he's only joking. I'll just tell you all I know myself in regard to Philip Sheehan."

"I wouldn't satisfy him," put in Paul.

Regardless of the interruption Ned went on to state what he had heard of Philip Sheehan and his tragical death, winding up with a glowing panegyric on Paul for his generous devotion to the old woman.

As he proceeded in his brief narrative, Cassidy's face lighted up under the coat of coal-dust that made his origin very questionable. When Ned told of Philip's occupation he nodded and said "Exactly," and again when he heard of his untimely death he smiled and rubbed his hands together as though he was delighted to hear it. His satisfaction was not shared by Paul.

"Are you done now?" he said with real or pretended anger when Ned came to a stop. "Did you say enough? Anything *you* know might as well be on the market-cross, Ned Finigan! —'deed it might!"

"Ho! ho! ho——"

"It's my turn now," said Cassidy, making a sign for Ned to restrain his ill-timed mirth; "give me your hand, my little hero!"

"Well! there it is, if it's any use to you," said Paul, "but for my part I think you're a little too fond of puttin' your nose in other people's porridge."

"No matter what you think or what you say," said Cassidy,

shaking the large bony hand which the dwarf held out to him; "you're the heart's blood of a brave fellow—that's what you are. Now, I've good news for you!"

"You have, eh! and what is it?" asked Paul half in jest, half in earnest; "has the counsellor got Repale, or maybe 'the French are on the seas' at long last to give poor Ireland a lift?"

"Neither one nor the other," said Cassidy, looking round with sufficient self-importance on the eager listeners; "but I'm going home with *you* to-night to pay my respects to that old woman of yours!"

"No, nor the devil a step," said Paul angrily, while various expressions of disappointment escaped the others. "I want none of your tom-foolery, my good fellow!—d'ye hear that now?"

"I don't *want* to hear it," said Cassidy with sly humor, "if I did, I might be thinking hard of them that taught you manners. I've a little business with Mrs. Sheehan—ahem!"

"What business have *you* with her?"

"Don't be jealous now, and I'll tell you. I only wanted to see if she'd have any objection to a little money that's laid up for her. That's all."

"Money laid up for *her*?" cried Ned.

"For old Dolly Sheehan?" exclaimed Ally in amazement. Paul said nothing, but he looked as if he would like to hear more.

"For old Dolly Sheehan!" repeated Cassidy, "it's proud I am to tell it;" and the tears came into his eyes as he glanced meaningly over Paul's garments woefully thin and disfigured with more than one unsightly patch. "There's a good three hundred dollars waiting for her out in Cincinnati. Her son was saving up intending to go home in a year or two when he'd have something worth taking along, and now the money is there after him, and nobody for it but the old mother."

"The Lord in heaven be praised!" said Ally almost crying

for joy. Paul said nothing but his lips quivered, and he looked very hard at Cassidy to ascertain what truth was in his marvellous story.

"Lord! the old woman will go out of her senses!" said Ned; "it's best not let her know too suddenly."

"What fools we are!" said Paul abruptly breaking silence. "Don't we know very well that if Philip Sheehan *did* leave money behind him, no bank that has it would give it to an old creature that they knew nothing about."

"True enough," said Cassidy, "but supposin' it isn't a bank that has it, but one of the priests there—how would that be?"

"Oh! bedad, that's a different story," said Paul with sudden animation; "if the priest has it, it's all right—he'll not mis-doubt Dolly's word. But how will she get to Cincinnati?"

"Why, in one of them elegant, fine coaches you were tellin' us about, Paul," said Ned jocosely, for he was really as merry as if the good news had been to himself. "Them with the velvet cushions, you know, that takes people for nothing wherever they want to go!"

The joke was lost on Paul whose attention was fixed on Cassidy.

"No need at all for her to go," the latter replied, "what priest knows Dolly here?"

"Father B—— of St. James's knows all about her."

"Very good. If you'll just get Father B—— to write to Father P—— in Cincinnati, and certify that he knows Mrs. Sheehan to be the right woman, stating the townland and parish that she's from in the Queen's County, that's all you have to do, for I heard Father P—— asking information of her in the Church two or three different times, and he said he had learned from her parish priest at home that she had come out to America, and that it would be an act of charity to help to find her out."

"I'll be biddin' you good night, Ned!" said Paul abstractedly, and he reached his hand across the counter.

"Is it goin' you'd be, Paul, after hearin' such good news, without as much as thankin' the decent man for tellin' you?"

"But isn't he comin' home with me to see Dolly?"

"He may when I'm done with him, and you, too," said Ned, "but I'll floor the first man that attempts to go without my leave. Sit down there on the benches every man of you till I make you a rousing tumbler of punch to drink old Dolly's health, and a long lease to her and somebody we'll not mention!"

In vain Paul objected, the others were all quite willing to accept Ned's treat, and Paul being left in a minority of one was at length forced to give in. At another time the little man might have cut the matter short with an ill-served answer, but he was really more elated than he chose to acknowledge, and felt disposed to meet Ned's kindness at least half way. So down he sat with Cassidy by his side, thinking, in the fullness of his heart, how he could show his gratitude to that individual.

"By Jemini! that's it!" said he as his eye fell on Cassidy's feet, not over well protected from the cold.

"What are you about, man?" said Cassidy. Paul had unconsciously spoken aloud, and, moreover, slapped his neighbor lustily on the knee. "I bar *that* play, anyhow!" The laugh that followed made Paul ashamed, and he put on a very cross face, as was his wont, when trying to conceal his feelings.

"I say, Paul," said Ned, after the proposed toast had been duly drunk, "did you see the Castle?"

"Castle! what Castle?"

"Why, *my* Castle, to be sure."

"Your Castle! I didn't know you had one——"

"Well! you see I have—ha! ha! ha! I'm a greater man than my forebearer that only saved a castle for others—I've one of my own." Ned's pleasant laugh was echoed by the others who understood the jest, but Paul looked sufficiently puzzled.

"And where may *your* Castle be?" he said; "I suppose it's up in the air like the one that was a-top of Jack's Bean-Stalk long ago."



"Faith, an' that's just where it is," said Ned, rubbing his hands together in great glee; "mine's up in the air sure enough, but it beats Jack's castle hollow, for it comes and goes with every blast of wind. Didn't you see it as you came in?"

"Oh ho!" said Paul, "it's the sign you mean. Well! indeed, I never thought of lookin' up, but I'll go and have a peep at it now."

Out went Paul and out went Ned to indicate the perfections of his castle. It was a sight to see the two standing together like the giant and the dwarf in a penny show, Paul with one eye closed looking up at the swinging sign with the air of a connoisseur, and Ned looking down at his face to note the effect of his observation.

"Well!" said Ned, "what do you think of it?—isn't it beautiful?"

"Bedad it is," said Paul with a very grave face; "it's a fine"—the word *castle* stuck in his throat, for Paul was a lover of truth—"it's mighty well done," said he, "mighty well done, I declare!"

"Well! it isn't as like *the castle* as I'd wish," said Ned very much in earnest, as they returned into the house, "but you know it isn't to be expected that you'd get a castle painted here as you would at home!—ha! ha! ha! it's little they know of castles in America!—still it makes a fine show, and the Tipperary boys are as proud of it as can be!"

"Why, what castle is it?" demanded Paul immediately.

"Well then, now Paul! what castle *would* it be?"

"Why, Dublin Castle, I suppose."

"Dublin Castle!" cried Ned contemptuously, "a fig for Dublin Castle and them that owns it!—no, sir! its *Ardfinnan* Castle! that's what it is, and I wonder at you, Paul, not to know it!"

"Well!" said Paul hard pushed for an excuse, "I suppose it's because *Ardfinnan* Castle now is, like myself, the worse for

the wear, and your castle is bran new—still I am proud to see it where it is, and that it may last as long as its namesake! that's the worst I wish it." Paul emptied his glass with a most emphatic gesture, looking into it with widely distended eyes as though the castle were daguerreotyped on the bottom.

When himself and his new friend Cassidy were buttoned up ready to start, the little man suddenly remembered the object of his visit, and tapping Ned on the elbow he asked if he might have a word with him in private before he went.

Leaving Ally in charge of the bar, Ned took the hunchback into a small room communicating with the other by a door then closed. Having ascertained that it was so, Ned returned to Paul and having made him sit down asked what he wanted.

"Well, I don't want much," said Paul smiling very graciously, "nothing but a little information. Did you hear anything new about Herbert since I seen you?"

"Hush! hush! No, I didn't—did you?"

Ned spoke almost in a whisper, but Paul answered in his usual shrill tone, higher than usual Ned thought: "I did," said he, "I did, Ned! I hear he's keepin' very low company——"

"Bad cess to you, Paul! can't you speak lower?"

"I can't," says Paul, raising his voice still higher as if for contradiction. "Attend to what I'm sayin'!"

"But what is it to me what company Mister—ahem! what company any one keeps?"

Paul was suddenly seized with a fit of deafness. "Anan?" said he leaning forward, and putting his hand to the ear next to Ned.

"That I mayn't die in sin," said Ned in his natural voice, "if you're not the contrariest creature that ever man or mortal met! You heard well enough what I said—so you did!"

"Maybe I did, maybe I didn't!"

"I'll tell you again, then, but mind you hear it this time, or—you may travel farther for news." So he repeated what

he had said, and Paul nodded a gruff assent—but he leered up into Ned's face with a smile that was bitter as gall.

"But what if Bessy Conway was still keepin' *him* company underhand? would that make any difference?"

"But you don't mean to say she is!" cried Ned starting to his feet with a fierce gesture.

"That's *just* what I mean," said Paul, "and nothing else."

Without saying another word Ned opened the door leading to the adjoining room, and before Paul had time to think of what he was about, back he came with Henry Herbert by the arm; flinging the door after him, Ned marched his astonished companion to the middle of the room; and planted him, as it were, right in front of Paul.

"I want to know is that true?" said Ned, while the others regarded each other with no very friendly aspect. "Is it *true*, Mr. Herbert, or is it not?"

"I can't say till I know what it is."

"Are Bessy Conway and you keepin' company? Does she encourage you to be runnin' after her, makin' a show of her?"

"Who says she does?" demanded Herbert, with a withering glance at Paul.

"I say so!" said the dwarf, raising himself on his toes to be nearly on a level with Herbert's face.

"I never thought you were a liar—whatever else you might be," said the young man coldly, and he drew back a step.

"Whatever else I might be!" repeated the hunchback slowly, "and what else do you think I *am*, Mister Herbert?"

"A busy meddling creature—to say the least of it—a sort of a Paul Pry!" he added with a poor attempt to make a joke of it, for there was that in Paul's eye that made him wince.

"It's well you've no worse than that to say," said the dwarf pointedly. "No need for me to be a vagabond on the earth if that's all that's against me in the Book!"

A mortal paleness overspread Herbert's face, and his trembling lips could scarce articulate a word, yet he tried to laugh,

and gave Paul a slap on the shoulder by way of sport. "Well! really, Paul, you *are* the drollest fellow!—upon—my honor! you—you make me laugh!"

"But what about Bessy?" said Ned, as much to relieve Herbert as anything else.

"Ay! what about Bessy?" repeated the hunchback.

"Well! as regards Bessy," said Herbert, making a violent effort to recover his composure, "I give you my word of honor that she never met me even once—*by her own consent*—in any place or at any time."

"Look me in the face, now," said Paul, "and tell me that yourself and her weren't out walkin' together last Sunday was a fortnight! Come now, tell the truth!"

"I don't deny it," said Herbert, the angry blood rushing to his cheek; "but it was not with Bessy's will—I happened to see her passing along Oliver street and she seemed in trouble—I felt sorry to see her looking so sad, and I certainly did speak to her, and although she begged me not to do so, I walked with her a little way."

"There now!" cried Paul exultingly, fully expecting that Ned would take up the matter, but no such thing. Ned all at once discovered that he was staying too long, and merely said, laying his big hand on Herbert's shoulder: "I thought you promised us before, Mister Herbert, that you'd let that girl alone. Now I hope you'll keep your word better for the time to come."

"Lord bless me!" said Paul to himself, "didn't he cool down mighty sudden!" Herbert turned at the moment as he disappeared through the same door by which he had entered, and fixed a look on Paul that made him start, with all his coolness and self-possession. It was as though he had said: "The game is in my hand—look out for yourself now!"

"He's worth a watching—that same lad!" thought the dwarf, "but I see I needn't count any more on Ned. Hum—m—I see how it is—he brings lots of custom to the Castle I suppose

—well! sure enough he's a deep fellow for all that smilin' face of his!"

Ned was already at his post again eager to make up for lost time. Ally was going up stairs with her sister who had just come in. Paul would have passed them by with a parting nod to Mrs. Finigan, but the latter hailed him with: "Is that the way you treat old acquaintances, Paul?—don't you see our Mary?"

"That your Mary!" shading his eyes with his hand; "why, then, indeed, Mrs. Finigan, ma'am, I thought it was some grand lady was in it! By the laws, Mary! but you're an altered girl since I seen you! How are you, at all!"

"Well! I thank you!" said Mary very stiffly, for Paul's appearance was not such as warranted familiarity, especially before strangers. "I guess you have the advantage of me!" she added, as she stooped to gather up the folds of her dress. "There! if you hadn't your great filthy boot right on my new silk dress!—dear! how awkward some people are!" and with a toss of her head which set the flowers on her bonnet a dancing merrily, on she swept towards the stairs.

Paul stood looking after her with a comical look of wonder on his thin spare face, then turning to her sister he said with mock earnestness: "Now, you don't mean to tell me that *that's* your sister Mary?"

"Why, to be sure it is, Paul!" said Mrs. Finigan, a little nettled, "who else would it be?"

"Well! after that," said Paul, holding up his hands, "nobody need wonder at anything! A good evening to you, Mrs. Finigan!—ahem! Give my compliments, ma'am, to the young lady within—I suppose we must call her Miss Mary Maria Murphy! Good Lord! *'my new silk dress!'*"

Mrs. Finigan was very indignant, and made her exit in sullen silence, but Ned hearing what had passed, laughed in his good-humored way as Paul shook hands with him across the counter.

"You'll make them all afraid of you, Paul!"

"I say, Ned, does she dress in that fashion every day?"

"(Hut, tut, man! no, she doesn't, but you see we're going to have a *hop* to-night, and that's what made her dress up!—We've a smoking-club that meets here two evenings in the week, and this is one of their nights; it's them that's gettin' up the dance."

"Oh! I see! I see!—well! Mister Cassidy, I think we'll be going, it's wearin' late."

Cassidy would just as soon not have gone, for he and his companions felt themselves very comfortable just then over a fresh "round" of punch, and he was loath to exchange the snug bar-room for the cold bleak streets and the wintry blast that was making the doors and windows quiver, and buffeting Ardfinnan Castle as if it blew from the mouths of Cromwell's cannon. Still when he thought of the pleasant task he had before him, he jumped to his feet at once, and having made sure of what remained in his tumbler, "just to keep out the cold," he bade his companions and the landlord good night, and, buttoning up their thin coats, so as to obtain the greatest amount of protection *they* could give against the piercing blast, the two dived out into the darkness and disappeared.

## CHAPTER VIII.

It was hard to persuade old Dolly that Cassidy's story was true. She could by no means realize it to herself that *she* was the heiress-apparent to so much wealth. The mention of it, however, in connection with her lost son, brought torrents of tears from her eyes. Suddenly a new notion entered her head, and hastily drying up her tears she said, fixing her eyes on Paul:

"Well! wouldn't it be a funny thing if it was true, after all? An' sure enough, I was dreamin' of my father last night—God rest his soul! an' he never comes to me but for good luck:—eh, Paul! what do you think?"

"Why, then, didn't I tell you, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am! that it's as true as the Gospel? The money is there, sure enough, if you can only *get* it!"

"Oh! if that's all, there'll be no trouble about it—we can borrow what'll take us from Ned Finigan, and we'll start to-morrow, please God!"

When told that it was not at all necessary for her to go to Cincinnati, but only to her own priest in New York, the old woman's joy knew no bounds. Still there was grief in her very joy, and a gush of tears would come in the midst of her rejoicing.

"Oh Philip! Philip!" she sobbed out, "are you doin' for your ould mother, an' you in your grave—ma gra gal you wor!"

"The sorra grave he's in," said Paul in an under tone to Cassidy, "if the creature only knew it!"

In order to direct her thoughts from this fatal remembrance Cassidy asked with great apparent interest :

"But, granny, what are you going to do with all your money, when you get it?"

At this Dolly's old face lightened up like a wintry sunbeam. "What will I do with it!—oh, then, it's myself knows that well——"

"An' what is it?" said Paul by way of humoring her.

"It's none of your business, Paul Brannigan!" with a toss of her old head that was quite comical to see.

"See that now, Mister Cassidy!" said the dwarf pleasantly, "see what it is to have money!—but that's true," and rising he took down his measure from a shelf hard by, "that's true, Mister Cassidy, I want to take your measure for a pair of boots."

"Well! I declare, Mr. Brannigan!" said Cassidy with some embarrassment, "I'd be willin' to give you the job—and, indeed, I'm not out of the need of it at the present time"—he looked ruefully down at his feet—"but then—then——"

"Bad cess to you, why don't you speak out at onst?" said Paul testily; "why *shouldn't* I make you the boots?"

"Well! for a very good reason," said the smut-faced artisan, "because the money isn't to spare at home. Though I have good steady work all the year round, somehow we're hardly ever able to make both ends meet. Money is always the scarcest thing with us!"

"Still you can find some for Ned Finigan," said Paul with a caustic smile. "But that's no business of mine. Who said you'd have to pay for the boots?—hold up your foot here!" One would think he meant to cut off the limb he seized it so roughly. Cassidy submitted very quietly to the operation, and when it was completed Paul straightened himself up.

"Now, go home!" said he, "like a decent man, an' if you'll take a friend's advice you'll spend your evenings there. I'd tell you the same if Ned Finigan was to the fore this present



minute—indeed he's not without knowin' my opinion before now in regard to the business he's in. If you want ever to have anything by you, or to keep your head above water, you'll keep away from such places altogether."

"Well, I declare, Mister Brannigan, I don't spend much when I do go, and it isn't often I go, at all."

"That says nothing—the habit will grow on you before you know where you are. Go an odd time into a tavern taking a sup with this one and a sup with that one, and you'll soon be that you can't stay a whole evenin' quietly at home. But *stay* at home for a week or so, an' read a book or something that way, an' you'll see you'll not care for goin' anywhere, an' you'll wonder at how much money it'll save you."

"Now that's as true as if the priest said it," chimed in Dolly; "it takes Paul to give a good advice!"

Cassidy put it off with a laugh, but there was a voice within him that bore testimony to the truth of Paul's words, and as he walked home through the darkness and the storm, that inward monitor kept saying: "Is it not true every word he said?—have you not spent many a dollar in the gin-shop in the lapse of years?—ay! as much as would clothe yourself and your family decently and comfortably, if you had it by you now?"

On the following Sunday old Dolly's claim was laid in due form before Father B—— and the good priest was only too happy to take the necessary steps on her behalf. After some weeks of anxious suspense, during which more than one communication passed between Father P—— of Cincinnati and Father B—— of New York, the latter had the satisfaction of obtaining the whole sum left by Philip Sheehan, amounting to three hundred and fifty dollars. It was the end of the week when the auspicious letter reached him, and he sent immediately to ask Mrs. Sheehan and Paul Brannigan to go to his house on Sunday afternoon.

"I suppose his reverence has got another letter," said Paul;

"now wouldn't it be a queer thing all out, Mrs. Sheehan, ma'am! if all ended in smoke?"

But Dolly would not let such a thought near her, and although she had no expectation of immediate success, still she put a little extra starch in her best high-cauled cap, and otherwise prepared herself to make "a dacent appearance" on the important occasion.

"It is the morning of the hallow'd day,"

and Dolly is off to an early Mass at St. James's, while Paul, intending to go to High Mass, strolls away towards the Park in search of "a mouthful of fresh air," as he said to himself. But Paul had another motive for taking his morning walk in that direction. The Park was then more deserving of the name than it now is, for its miniature charms were highly praised by people who had never seen the lawns, and glades, and groves, and avenues of a Regent's or a Phoenix Park. No rural resort had yet been provided for the good citizens of New York, and as the only place of shade to be had in that part of the city, the City Hall Park was the favorite haunt of all the dwellers "down town" who loved the verdure and the shade. The place was then in its palmy days, and had many a pleasant nook

"With seats beneath the shade,"

which if not exactly

"For talking age and whisp'ring lovers made,"

like those immortalized in Goldsmith's verse, were none the less most excellent resting-places for the sons and daughters of toil when on "the Sabbath, the poor man's day," they could sit and listen to the plash of the fountain and think of things past, present, and future. The Park had been Paul's favorite resort on Sundays ever since he came to New York, and although 'the leaves, and flowers, and verdure were all gone with the summer, and the fountain's pleasant song was heard no more, yet still might Paul be seen either sitting like a

grotesque statue on one of the benches, or sauntering leisurely along the walks every Sunday morning, unless when the weather was such as to keep the whole city in-doors.

On that particular Sunday the skies were clear and bright, and the ground hard frozen, and our queer little friend took up his position on a bench in front of the City Hall, in the avenue leading to Chambers street, then as now one of the busiest thoroughfares in New York City. And what brought Paul there that cold frosty morning? surely it was not pleasure, for Paul's garments were not over well suited to the state of the atmosphere, and he must have felt the cold keenly, for he got up every few minutes and took a turn or two backwards and forwards, stamping his feet on the ground, and slapping his hands against his sides after the old approved mode of keeping the blood in circulation. No, no, it was not for pleasure that Paul was there, but from a purer and higher motive that warmed his heart and tingled on his veins, and lifted him altogether beyond his own comfort or convenience. That motive was charity, the lambent flame whose fount is in heaven. One might have wondered to see the little stunted creature waiting there, as he evidently was, his thin old-fashioned face pinched and his hands red and blue with the cold, but the wonder would soon cease, for Paul had not waited very long when up with a race came a little ragged urchin with a bundle of newspapers under his arm, and him Paul greeted as a familiar acquaintance, if not an old one, telling him, at the same time, that he had been waiting for him.

"By golly! you had a cold sit of it, then," said the boy, with a shiver. "Haven't none of the others come along yet?"

"Not one, not one; did you tell them?"

"Yes, I did; they'll be around, never fear! They wanted dreadful bad to know what you had got to say to them."

"And you didn't tell them, did you?"

"I guess not!" said the precocious youngster, who rejoiced in the name of Mike Milligan, "'cause why, I didn't know my

self. Here they come, anyhow. Hurry up, will you?"—raising his voice—"here's the man I told you of."

Paul was speedily surrounded by some six or eight lads in the same "fantastic livery bedight," not one of them all having a single garment free from rents or patches. It needed not the bundle of papers carried by each to point them out as members of that noisy community whose cries are amongst the first to wake the echoes of the city after "the rosy dawn appears."

"Here they are now for you," said Mike laughing, "here's the Sunday papers," and then he introduced all the gaping youngsters, some as the *Sunday Times*, others the *Sunday Herald*, and so on.

"Yes, yes," said Paul, "but you have other names than them, haven't you?"

"Well yes, there's Terry Smith, and Pat Boyle, and Sam Hooks, and Limping Jo, and Humpy Peter"—at this last name the boys, except Peter himself, all laughed and looked up slyly at Paul, as if to see how he took it. Paul laid his hand kindly on little Peter's head, but appeared to take no other notice of what the astute urchins enjoyed as a capital joke.

"So you're all Irish?" said he.

"No, no!" none of them would give in to that.

"What religion do you belong to?"

The boys shook their heads.

"Are you Catholics or Protestants, I mean?"

Yes, most of them were Catholics, but a few were Protestants, and amongst them were Sam Hooks and Limping Jo.

"Do you ever go to Church, then, any of you?"

"Why, *no*!" said Mike Milligan, speaking for the others, "folks don't buy papers there, do they?"

"What difference is there, then, between the Catholics and Protestants among you? How do you know one from the other?"

Hearing this the boys all laughed and winked knowingly at

each other, evidently setting down "the old coon" in their own minds as particularly "green!"

"Why, golly! that's plain enough," said Terry Smith, a thin-faced, old-fashioned lad, whose age might be ten or sixteen, for his size was of the former, his face of the latter age. "The Catholics go in for the bishop and the priests, and the Protestants run dead against them—they vote one ticket, you see, and we vote the other."

Although this brief colloquy occupied but a few moments, the youngsters began to show signs of impatience, and guessed they couldn't wait any longer in the cold. They must sell their papers.

"I'll not keep you many minutes," said Paul, "for myself hasn't much time to spare more than you. I jist want to ask you a few questions, and then you can go for this time. Peter!"—to his little brother in deformity—"Peter! can you tell me who is God?"

Peter shook his head. The same question being put to the others in turn, some said they did not know, others had heard of God, but they couldn't tell who He was; one guessed He was higher than the President and lived a great ways off where nobody ever could see Him. Some of the boys laughed at this and said: "An't you ashamed, not to know who God is?"

Sam Hooks had often heard of God, but he guessed it was all make-believe. Mike Milligan rebuked the young heathen sharply and answered at once:

"I guess *I* know: God is the Maker of heaven and earth and all things."

"Right," said Paul, "quite right. God is the Creator of the world, and the Judge of all mankind. He has a heaven of joy and beauty to reward the good, and a fiery hell to punish the wicked. He is a great and mighty God, and it is a dreadful thing to offend Him."

The youngsters listened with gaping wonder, differently affected by the announcement of these awful truths. Some were deeply impressed while others only laughed.

"Guess he won't come it on *me*!" said Sam Hooks, putting on a very determined face; "*I* know what he's up to—I do!"

"Shut up there, Hooks!" cried Terry Smith, "let the man speak, will you!"

"Which of you can tell me how many Gods there are?" said Paul. Some said *three*, some *two*, and a very few answered correctly—of this number again was Paul's first acquaintance, Mike Milligan.

"Good!" said Paul, "there is only one God, but now tell me, if you can, how many persons in God?"

This was a puzzler, and after thinking for some time and making various guesses on the subject, it was left for Mike to solve as before. Mike knew the number of persons in the Blessed Trinity, and the names by which they were distinguished. He could also make the sign of the Cross.

Wondering eyes were turned on Mike, and Paul laid his hand kindly on the lad's shoulder. "Why, who taught you this, my little man? You say you never go to Church?"

"Well! I guess it was Nancy Leary."

"And who is Nancy Leary?"

The boy looked up at Paul with intent to speak, but the tears gushed from his eyes, his head sunk on his breast, and he said nothing. Some of the others hastened to explain. Nancy Leary was an old apple-woman who had found Mike, when two or three years old, sitting on a cellar-door crying for his "mammy," which individual, whether living or dead, never answered to the call. So Nancy Leary adopted Mike, and shared her bit and her sup, and her straw couch with him while she lived, ay! and begged clothes for him, too, which her rough, weather-hardened hands kept in repair; but Nancy died and the child could hardly be torn from the white deal coffin in which public charity encased the poor apple-woman's mortal remains; no wonder, the boy added, for Mike never had any friend but old Nancy, and she kept him first-rate comfortable.

"I guess I'd know many things I don't know," sobbed out Mike, "if Nancy hadn't died that time. *She* knew all about God, and the Blessed Virgin, and a sight of things that I don't remember now."

"God rest her soul!" ejaculated Paul with simple fervor, recognizing in the poor street-seller a departed sister in the Lord.

The little instruction which had fallen to Mike Milligan's share was unhappily confined to himself. Most of the others were quite willing to learn, however, and appeared much interested in the marvellous things told them of God and the world's redemption, and the sublime destiny of man, as co-heir with Christ in the kingdom of His Father.

But Sam Hooks was still skeptical, and made a mockery of the whole thing. Hearing the *kingdom* mentioned, he broke in with an oath:

"Stop there, old fellow! I guess you've gone about far enough. You don't take us for fools, do you?"

"Deed no, Sam! but I take you for Christians redeemed by the blood of a God, and I'd wish to put you in the way of savin' your souls and growin' up decent, creditable men."

"Bosh! we an't ever going to be much better off than we are now. If you can tell us how to make money and get fine clothes, and good eating and drinking, and have good times all the year round, then I'll call you a blamed smart old chap; but I guess that an't in *your* way."

"Why so, Sam?"

"Well, it a'n't hard to tell that, anyhow," said Sam, with a knowing glance at Paul's shabby apparel. "Don't any fool know that nobody wears a bad coat or a bad hat if he can anywhere's get a good one, and for the eating and drinking—gosh!—and he laughed in Paul's face—"you look as though you didn't know what it was! don't he, now?"

Some of the youngsters laughed at this sally, but most of them rebuked Hooks for his want of reverence. Sam only laughed the more.

"Don't mind him, sir," then said Terry Smith, "I guess he'd talk so to his mother—if he had one—nobody minds him!"

"I'll make *you* mind me, anyhow!" said Sam, and suiting the action to the word, he applied his fist to Terry's ear with a force that would have knocked him down had not Paul caught him by the arm. Terry seemed disposed to resent the insult, and the other boys would have taken his part, for Sam was no favorite among them, but Paul interposed and with no small difficulty succeeded in restoring peace.

"As for you," said he to Sam, "I think you'd best go your ways."

"I guess that's about the truest word you've said yet, my old coon," Sam answered quickly; "when Mike Milligan or you catch *me* again listening to confounded old yarns when I ought to be selling my papers, you may send me up on a kite's back in search of that kingdom you spoke of—you may!"

Away he went and Paul made no effort to detain him. "If you don't change your hand, my good fellow," he said to himself, looking after him, "you'll go up in a rope some day—though not to heaven!"

"Let him go!" said Mike, "it's a small loss!"

"Well! it an't *much* matter, Mike," said he of the *Herald*, very much in earnest; "Sam's a hard case, anyhow. I guess he might run for office any day, if he was only big enough."

"Run for office?" inquired Paul opening his eyes very wide. "Why, what does that mean?"

The boys all laughed. "Ha! ha! old dad, you don't know *that*—guess *you'll* never get a nomination, anyhow!"

"Except for scavenger!" suggested Limping Jo; "there an't much pickings in that, you know, and I guess an honest man might slip in there."

"Lord! Lord!" said Paul to himself, "isn't it the quare country all out! but I suppose we must only take our turn out of it, let it be as it may."

"Well, boys!" said he, "it's time I was movin' home for I



have my breakfast to get before Mass-time. I'm sorry I can't stop longer with you now, but next Sunday morning, God willing, you'll all meet me here if the weather is good, and try to bring some more with you, an' we'll have a little while to talk."

They all promised cheerfully. "Well now! let us see, before you go," said Paul, "if you remember what I told you."

Yes, yes! they remembered: one God, in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"And the heaven that's to reward the good, and the fiery hell to punish the wicked. You'll keep all that in mind, will you?"

All right, they'd remember that, too, but after a brief consultation amongst themselves they detained Paul to ask another question: "Who is the Blessed Virgin?"

"Lord bless me!" said Paul, oblivious for the moment of the gross darkness that enveloped the minds of his hearers, "Lord bless me! don't you know that? Why, sure, the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of Our Lord. I'll tell you all about Him and her next Sunday, please God."

"Well!" said Pat Boyle musingly, "if the Virgin Mary is the Mother of Our Lord, I guess her Son must be real angry with some folks"—and he looked significantly at Joe—"I've heard awful bad things said of her—I have!"

"Never mind, my little fellow," said Paul, "there was everything bad said of Christ himself when He was here on earth, but depend on it, He'll one day settle accounts with them that blaspheme His *mother's* name. We must leave it all in His hands."

"Yes, I guess it's His own business," said Larry Rooney, "I know what I'd do to any one that called *my* mother names—for all she's dead now——"

"Why, what would you do, my boy?"

"I guess—I'd—give them *Jessy*!" the lad replied speaking through his closed teeth, accompanying his words with an

emphatic shake of his tiny fist which came alarmingly near Jo's proboscis, whether by accident or design.

"Well! the Blessed Virgin is your mother and my mother," said Paul quickly, "and the mother of all mankind—so you see what it is for any one to disrespect her!"

"Gosh! what a family she's got!" put in Limping Jo, somewhat irreverently.

"There! I told you," said Mike exultingly; "Nancy always called her mother, and she said she was real good to her, for all I never could git sight of her when she came along. Many a time I tried hard to keep my eyes open when Nancy was at her prayers at night, to see who she was talking to, but I always fell asleep as soon as she knelt down and began to pray to God and the Blessed Virgin and somebody she called Saint Joseph. Guess I wouldn't mind that name so well, only for 'limping Jo' there, 'cause why, we call *him* Joseph once in awhile."

"Blessed mother!" said Paul, half aloud, "are these the children of fathers that suffered, and died for the faith?" The tears gushed from his eyes, seeing which, the youngsters were much astonished, and looked up curiously in his face. Paul laid his hand kindly on the head of each, and told them not to mind him, but go home and be good boys.

"God be with you till I see you again!" said he, "and mind what I told you in regard to bringin' some more of the boys next Sunday."

Away scampered the ragged company, all except Mike Milligan, who was detained a moment by Paul.

"You'll not forget the other affair—eh, Mike?"

"See if I do," Mike answered with a sagacious nod.

"You're sure you know the house?"

"I *guess* I do!" and he grinned significantly.

"Very well, you may go now."

Mike ran off with a hop, step and a jump, and overtook the others just as they reached the gate. The last Paul saw of

him he was mounted on the shoulders of the *Times*' representative, which position he had gained with a spring, as the *terminus* of his race.

Paul stood a moment looking after his promising pupils, and once or twice he shook his head.

"Well, God help us!" said he to himself, "I'm afeard it's a poor chance—howsomever, we can only try. *We'll* do our best, and leave the rest to God."

He looked up at the clock in the cupola and found to his great surprise that it was already half-past nine.

"By the laws," said he to himself, "I'll have hard work to get my breakfast and be away in time—who'd think it was so late!"

Hurrying home as fast as he could, he found Dolly fretting and talking to herself at a great rate about the breakfast being spoiled, and people "goin' stravagin' about, when they ought to be in the house to get a comfortable bit an' sup of a Sunday mornin'. It was purty work, so it was!" Dolly said as she placed the meal on the small table before Paul.

The little man laughed and hummed in Irish in a not unmelodious voice:

"O Woman of Three Cows, agragh! don't let your tongue thus rattle!  
O don't be saucy, don't be proud, altho' you may have cattle!"

This allusion to her good luck restored Dolly's good humor. "Wisha, that I mayn't sin, Paul, but you'd make a body laugh if they were dyin'!—hurry with your breakfast like a dacent man as you are, till I get the things cleared away!"

"Oh to be sure!" said Paul, "to be sure, we're like a hen on a hot griddle till we see the priest the day. Sure enough! this money beats the world wide!"

Paul's frugal meal was soon despatched and away he went to St. James's, well pleased to find that Mass was not yet commenced. It so happened that the sermon that day was on the text "Faith without works is dead," and as the preacher

proceeded to enumerate the works which are most available for salvation, Paul's heart swelled with joy as his ears drank in the glorious promise: "They who instruct the ignorant shall shine as the stars in heaven."

"Well! that's worth a workin' for, anyhow," said he to himself as he paced along on his homeward way. "Isn't it a great thing for the likes of me to think that I can gain that high place in heaven as well as if I was rich or handsome, or well-dressed, or could read Latin like the priest! Isn't it now? So, Paul Brannigan! keep up your heart, and do what you can to make the name of God known and honored! It isn't much you can do, poor man! and do your best, but every little helps, you know, and when God didn't give you the ability to do much, he'll not expect it from you, blessed be His name! But you know well that what you *can* do, you *must* do, so now, stir yourself,—if you want to get the reward, you must do something for it!"

It was late that afternoon when Vespers were over and Father B—— at liberty to attend to Dolly Sheehan, who, with Paul, sat waiting in the hall of the presbytery.

"Well, do you know, Paul aroon!" said the old woman as a ring at the door-bell made her start, "do you know, I'm gettin' mighty timorous about it!"

"About what?"

"Why, then, about this money. Now see what trouble we're givin' his reverence, an' maybe for nothing at all."

"I tell you, Mrs. Sheehan! you're nothing else but a fool!" said Paul peevishly—"I ask your pardon for sayin' it, ma'am! an' I wouldn't say it only it's the truth!"

With all Dolly's habitual respect for Paul she was going to make him a sharp answer when the entrance of the priest gave a turn to her thoughts. Taking them into the back parlor, Father B—— went to a secretary and took out a letter which he handed to Dolly with a smile.

The old woman's hand trembled so that she could not take

it. "Won't you read it for me, your reverence?" she said in a faint voice; I'm afraid——"

"Don't be afraid, then," said Father B——, after glancing over the letter, "here's a draft for *three hundred and fifty dollars!* Do you hear?"

"I do, your reverence, I do!" said Dolly, falling back in her chair, as pale as death; the next moment she started up with sudden energy and a kind of hysterical laugh, and snatching the paper from the priest's hand, thrust it into Paul's.

"What are you about, woman?" said the hunchback sharply. "Keep your money when you have it."

"I won't keep it, then, nor I can't keep it. If I'm a fool, as you say I am, I'm not *fit* to keep it. You'll keep it for me, for I tell you it's yours as much as it's mine."

It was no use trying to reason her out of this notion, and all the priest could get her persuaded to do was to allow Paul to put the money in the bank—but even that in his own name.

It is hard to say which was the happiest on that occasion, Father B——, Paul, or old Dolly Sheehan.

## CHAPTER IX.

MEANWHILE Bessy Conway was "getting along first-rate," as her friends would say. Sally's conduct became at last altogether intolerable, and her mistress was obliged to part with her. Mrs. Hibbard, like many other ladies, had a great aversion to Intelligence Offices, and said to Mrs. Walters that she thought she would try an advertisement as she had got some pretty good servants by that means in times past.

"Well! you need be in no hurry, Matilda!" said Mrs. Walters, "better wait a week or so, and perhaps you might hear of some good girl out of place, and Bessy will be very glad to do the housemaid's work till you get one."

This arrangement was very satisfactory to all parties, and when Bessy had been some days acting in her new capacity, Mrs. Hibbard said to her one morning: "Now, Bessy, as you seem to get along so well with my work in addition to Mrs. Walters', what do you think if you would take Sally's place, and I will give you the same wages I gave her? I am very much pleased with the manner in which you do your work, and still more so with the spirit in which you go about it."

Bessy's heart jumped at the thoughts of earning so much money, and she was scarcely less pleased to find that Mrs. Hibbard thought so well of her, but still she would not think of closing such a bargain without consulting Mrs. Walters. "Whatever *she* says, ma'am, I'm willing to do."

"Oh! of course, Bessy, I did not for a moment suppose that you would engage with me without having obtained the con-

sent of your mistress, but I am pretty certain that *she* will make no objection—on the contrary, she will be quite pleased with the arrangement."

And so Mrs. Walters *was* pleased, and proud, too, she said, of her little Tipperary girl, who was able and willing to discharge the duties of such a situation in a few months after leaving her father's cottage in Ardfinnan. "You see, my dear Bessy," said she laying her hand kindly on the girl's shoulder, "you see how easy it is to please any employer when you set about it in the proper way. No doubt you have often heard Mrs. Hibbard's girls complain of her being too particular about the work."

"Why, then, indeed, I did, ma'am, many a time," said Bessy with a smile; "its what Sally used to say, and Bridget, too, for that matter,—that the devil himself wouldn't please her, and that a saint out of heaven couldn't bear her."

Hearing this, Mrs. Walters laughed. "Well, Bessy, I'm quite sure that *you* don't belong to the lower regions and yet you seem to please Mrs. Hibbard very much indeed, neither do I think you find it so very difficult to *bear* with her, although you are not yet a saint out of heaven, whatever you may be in time to come. But what will you do with all the money you are going to make?"

"Well! I'll just tell you that, ma'am," said Bessy, "I intend to write home first of all to ask my father and mother if they want any to let me know. If things go on as well with them as they did of late years, they'll not be in any present want, and so I'll leave my money in your hands till I have a good deal, and then maybe I'd go home to them some fine day when they least expect me, and help to do for the boys and girls. Wouldn't that be a grand thing entirely, Mrs. Walters?" said the girl earnestly, her face all radiant with the anticipated joy of such a meeting.

"You are a good girl, Bessy!" said her mistress, her eyes full of tears; "so long as you cherish those unselfish disposi-

tions and think more of others than of yourself, you will be sure to do well in every respect, for our good God blesses such generous devotion. But I cannot take charge of your treasure very long, for I do not know how long I may remain here, and besides your money will be better in the Savings Bank where you will get interest for it."

Bridget was by no means satisfied with the change which had taken place, for Sally was a girl after her own heart, and although they fought every hour of the day when they were together, and sometimes carried their dispute so far that Wash had to use physical force to keep them from coming to blows, still there was so much in common between them that they sympathized one with the other after their own fashion. Bessy Conway was not long in the house when they discovered that she was not "one of *them*," and could not, therefore, be admitted to their confidence. Ellen, the children's maid, was one of those good-natured, harmless persons who never by any chance give offence to any one, and will rather make any concession than "raise disturbance." She was naturally well-disposed and always had the intention of doing right, but having no fixed principles and very little instruction, she was easily turned from the path of rectitude either by threats or persuasions. She was, therefore, on excellent terms with the two "troopers," as Bessy called them,—they were "blazers" with old Wash.

But when Sally was finally and forever turned out, and Bessy was installed with honor in her place, Bridget mounted "the high horse" and never had a civil word to spare for the new housemaid as long as they were together. She took every opportunity of insulting Bessy, accusing her of "treachery," "back-biting," "hypocrisy," and what not. It was no use for Bessy to tell her over and over that she never asked for Sally's place, never thought of asking for it, even when it was vacant. In vain she assured her that no prospect of advantage to herself would induce her to undermine or seek to injure a fellow-



servant—she might as well talk to the winds. Bridget had made up her mind that she was “a pimp” and “a deceiver,” and, moreover, that “there was a dirty turn in her after all.”

“Well! well!” said Bessy, “I see there’s no use in contradicting you, so we’ll leave the matter to God and our own conscience.”

“Oh! yes, leave it to God,” said Bridget with a scornful toss of her head, “that’s easy said, but your pious airs won’t give Sally back her place, poor girl!”

“Well, now, Bridget, I declare it’s too bad for you to be blamin’ *me* for Sally losin’ her place,” said Bessy with some warmth; “don’t you know very well how often I advised her to take more care of it than she did, and to try and please her mistress instead of workin’ contradiction and givin’ back answers when she was spoken to about any thing. You know as well as I do that it wasn’t Sally’s work was in her head, but visitin’ and cosherin’ about, and raffles, and dances, and every-thing of the sort. If she had minded her business, and let such fooleries alone, she’d be here yet.”

Wash hastened to give *his* testimony to the same effect, but Bridget cut them both short with an imperative order to “shut up, and not be deavin’ her ears with their nonsense.” She knew what she knew, and that was all about it.

A fortnight or so after Sally left, Bessy went down one day to the kitchen, and who should be sitting there but Sally in her flounced plaid silk and light velvet bonnet. She hardly condescended to return Bessy’s salutation, but Bridget spoke for her.

“There!” said she, “you see it’s true enough that ‘there never was one door shut, but there was another open’—now Sally has got a first-rate place in a first-class family up town where she hasn’t scarce anything to do and has a dollar a month more wages than she had here. There an’t only four of a family and they keep four in help.”

“Dear me! that must be a fine place,” said Bessy; “I hope

Sally will try and keep it. I'm as glad as can be that she's so well settled."

Bridget and Sally both flew at her at once. One called her a liar, and the other told her she mightn't thank *her* for it. Luckily for Bessy, the door-bell rang at the moment and she hurried up stairs, Sally calling after her to be sure and tell Mrs. Hibbard what a fine place she had got.

"I wouldn't satisfy them to tell the truth," said Sally, "and I was real glad you made it up so slick. I guess I an't going to stay where I am, for I an't used, you know, to be up at five o'clock and it's pretty hard work cleaning after all sorts of rowdies in a saloon, for less wages, too, than I had here. Still I tell you I was glad enough to get it, for I was about tired going to that office, and besides my money was most all gone."

"Well! I guess you'd best stay where you are," said Bridget, "till you make sure of something better."

"I hear there's a kitchen-girl wanting in the Northern Hotel," said Sally; "I've a mind to go and see about it."

"What wages, did you hear?"

"Six dollars—just what I had from Mrs. Hibbard."

"Well! it's a great come-down, sure enough," said Bridget; "stil I guess it's about the best you can do at the present time. Hard fortune to that sa'cy jade, Bessy Conway!—it was an ill wind drove her across us!"

"Never mind," rejoined Sally with a bitter smile, "every dog has his day, you know, and 'it's a long lane has no turn'—mind that, Bridget!—but I must be off—the boss is the devil of a rough customer, and the old woman takes a drop more than she should!—he! he! he! a precious pair they are!—an't they?"

So saying, Sally took herself off with a very affected nod, and "Good-bye, Bridget! take care of yourself!"

That same evening, Paul Brannigan and old Dolly went off in company on a tour of discovery to the (to them) unknown

regions of the Sixth Avenue, where St. Joseph's Church rears its cross on high. They heard that Father Daly had been appointed assistant pastor of that Church, and they could not rest till they told him of their good fortune. Only for the hump, it would have been hard to recognize Paul in the new suit of clothes which Dolly insisted on buying for him the very day after she got the money, which clothes Paul put on that evening with great care, after coming from his work, "just to let his reverence see how a foolish old woman spent her money!"

When the pair got to Chatham Square a short colloquy ensued, in consequence of a bright idea that occurred to Paul. "I'll tell you what, Mrs. Sheehan," said he, all at once coming to a stand, "I think we'll have a ride—you never was in a coach yet, I suppose, so it's the least you may have a ride now in one, if it's only for the honor of the thing!"

"Well, Paul, I'm agreeable, if it doesn't cost too much."

"Hut, tut, woman! aren't these the President's coaches that I was tellin' you about awhile ago? Sure it's waitin' on the quality they are day and night!"

Having ascertained what particular stage would bring them the nearest to their destination, Paul bundled Dolly in, then mounted after her, and away they rattled over the rough pavement. As the lumbering omnibus is not the quickest conveyance in the world, we may as well go on before and see if the priest be there to receive them.

In the front parlor of St. Joseph's presbytery, three gentlemen were sitting, one writing at a desk, and the others conversing at the table. One of these was an old acquaintance, Father Daly, the other a tall stately man, with a somewhat cynical expression of countenance, long hair carefully kept, and a mien half lay, half clerical, that left you in doubt to which class he belonged. He was a priest, however, and a very good one, as the world goes, but he held some notions in regard to certain matters, not of faith, which appeared very

strange to Father Daly. He spoke rather contemptuously, too, of some practices of piety which the newly-arrived Irish priest held in high esteem, and so it was that whilst both professed the same enthusiastic love for Mother Church, and were quite in unison on all matters of faith, there were still so many little points of difference between them that it might be said they agreed to differ as often as they came together. Both, however, were gentlemen in the truest sense of the word, and, consequently, their disputes never exceeded the bounds of politeness, or, indeed, of Christian charity.

On that particular occasion they had been speaking of All Hallows College, and the number of missionaries it annually turned out.

"I cannot understand," said Father Seward, "how it is that vocations to the priesthood are so common in Ireland. Surely no country in all Christendom produces so many priests in proportion to its size and population."

"Well! *I* can understand it as easily as possible," returned Father Daly, "and if *you* knew the country as well as I do, you would have no difficulty either in accounting for the fact."

"Oh! I know all you would say," observed Father Seward with an equivocal smile, "I have heard it so often I can say it by rote—'Catholic country'—'Christian atmosphere'—'Christian traditions,' and so forth, and so forth. But taking all these into account, I still confess myself at a loss to explain the enigma."

"Excuse me if I say, then, that my good friend is duller of apprehension than I ever took him to be. If words were mere empty sounds, then, indeed, your dullness would be excusable, but if words represent ideas, it seems to me that the very phrases you have strung together—pardon me if I say rather flippantly—make the matter sufficiently plain for any comprehension. But if the causes enumerated are not sufficient to account for the vast number of priestly vocations found in Ireland, there is yet another which you may probably accept as more conclusive——"

"Oh! you mean *poverty*—"

"Well! that, too, for the lips of a God-man have pronounced the poor 'blessed,' and far be it from me to deny that Ireland is a poor country—I had almost said 'God keep her so!'—but that is not precisely what I mean. It is the calm repose, so to speak, that pervades Irish life, the contentment which springs from true religion, and is altogether opposed to that feverish whirl of excitement in which people here are perpetually engaged:—honor-seeking!—money-seeking!—office-seeking!—progress!—utility!—these be thy gods, O Israel!—these the soil which are expected to produce vocations—pshaw! do men gather figs of thorns, or grapes of thistles?"

"That's right, Father Malachy," said the priest at the desk, laying down his pen with a frank, hearty laugh; "don't spare him, for your life, for many a time he floored me in argument, not with facts, but assumptions, and I declare to you, Malachy, he brazened it out on me often, just because my logic wasn't so sharp as his. Now, Father Seward! I'm glad to see you have met your match!"

"Still I am not convinced," said Father Seward, "no argument can persuade me that God does not provide materials for the work He will have done. Wherever He is pleased to establish His Church it must surely be a part of the Divine economy to provide for the perpetuation of the priesthood."

"And does He not provide for it here?" said Father Daly, with the slightest possible show of exultation. "If not in one way, assuredly in another. Seeing that the restless spirit of the world reigns paramount in these new countries, and that all men are entangled in the meshes of worldly care and solicitude, the Almighty Ruler, instead of striking water from the hard rock, brings streams from the old fountains of Christianity in far-off lands to fertilize His infant Church. So long as the water is provided pure and in sufficient quantity, what matters it to you where it comes from?"

"Granting what you say," returned Father Seward, "and

dropping metaphor for the present, I think no one can doubt that a clergy taken from amongst the people of the country would be more efficient for good than any foreign missionaries, no matter how devoted or how exemplary!"

"I don't believe a word of it," said Father Daly quickly and decidedly; "you know as well as I do that every country now within the pale of the Church was first brought in by missionaries from abroad——"

"Oh! of course, of course, that is understood—indeed it could not be well otherwise—but when the Church so established has outlived the period of infancy and grown to man's estate, is it not in the nature of things that it should try to do for itself, and manage its own business?"

This was meant as a knock-down argument by Father Seward, and even Father Molloy considered it unanswerable. He looked anxiously at his friend, and his face brightened up again when he saw him smiling.

"Certainly, my dear sir," said he, "certainly you have a right to manage your own affairs, and are quite old enough to do it, but why do you *not* do it?—why is it still left for the most part to foreigners? I should like to know how your spiritual wants would be supplied at this very hour were it not for the foreign priests who flock to your shores. Why, my very good friend, I am filled with admiration at the bountiful dispensation of divine Providence in your regard—indeed I am, and I cannot help thinking that it shows a want of gratitude on your part—I speak, of course, collectively—to murmur at the *kind* of provision made, because it is not exactly the kind you would choose."

"But we do not murmur, by no means," said Father Seward very earnestly; "I hope we are truly thankful for the spiritual succor we receive——"

"Humph!" said Father Molloy, looking round over his shoulder, "thankful, indeed! we know how thankful you are, but that doesn't matter—the Lord conducts us here for a pur-

pose, and to do His holy will—let wh<sup>o</sup> may like it, we're able and willing to do it, and with a blessing so we will. As for thanks, they're not of much value, though I don't say but people like to have them when they know they're entitled to them."

The other gentlemen smiled to each other at this characteristic sally, and Father Daly said: "After all, my dear friend, I think it makes little difference in which hemisphere, or under what latitude a priest was born—if he be only detached from the world, willing to crucify the old Adam within him, for the sanctification of his own soul and the edification of others, and entirely devoted to the duties of his state, he will be welcomed everywhere as a true minister of God, and no man will esteem him the less because he came from this or that particular country. We are the laborers in the vineyard—there is more work than all of us can do—let each man do his best, and what he cannot do he will not have to account for, but, in God's name, let us be united, remembering the fate of the bundle of sticks when taken one from the other. Do you think I hold your virtues in less esteem than if you came from my own parish in Roscommon County—before God I do not, and, I think, the same spirit would actuate most foreign priests if you would only meet them half way, and, forgetting the place of their nativity, look upon them only as priests and brethren in the Lord. As your Church advances in age you will have priests of your own—at least I hope so—but God will take his own time for that—He knows what is best for you."

Father Seward was about to answer when a ring at the door made him pause and the next moment Father Daly was summoned to the hall where some persons wanted to see him. It is hardly necessary to tell the reader that it was Paul and Dolly. Father Daly was pleased to see them, and asked very kindly how they were getting on.

"Bedad, your reverence," said Paul, "we're most at the top

of the wheel already—if we go on as we're doin', we'll not know what to do with our money."

"Why, how is that, Paul?"

The story being told gave Father Daly so much pleasure that he asked Paul and Dolly to sit down, and went in to tell his friends. After a little he returned and took the pair of originals into the parlor.

"Now, Father Seward" said he, "I want to make you acquainted with two of my fellow-passengers who have been particularly fortunate since they came. They have found a purse, I believe."

Dolly hastened to correct this supposed mistake. "No, no, your reverence, that wasn't it, at all—I ask your pardon for contradictin' you—we didn't find the purse, you see, but got it from—where's that it came from, Paul?"

"From Cincinnati!"

"Ay, that's the place—well! it came from there, your reverence, and, ochone! it never belonged to anybody else but my own poor boy, an', indeed, it was his hard, hard earnin'."

"You are certainly very fortunate, my good woman!" observed Father Seward; "but what do you intend to *do* with your money?"

"What would she do with it," put in Father Molloy with assumed gravity, "only set up a tavern, herself and this decent man, if they once know how to doctor the liquor, they can make their fortune in no time."

"Well, supposin' we did, your reverence," said Paul in a respectful tone, "we might happen to pay too dear for what we'd make, an' we wouldn't put our souls in danger for the sake of a penny of money."

"Deed we wouldn't, Paul, agra, 'deed we wouldn't," chimed in Dolly; "haven't we more money now than we know what to do with, and what do we want but a livin' while we're here?"

The priests were much amused and no little interested by this



singular couple, so queer and quaint and old-world like, so sterling in their simple virtues. Father Molloy, however, could not resist the temptation to "poke some fun out of them."

"Well! Mrs. Sheehan," said he, "here's a priest from the Queen's County," and he pointed to Father Seward, "and you ever see him at home?"

Dolly drew her eyelids together so as to increase the power of her waning sight, and fixed her eyes on Father Seward, who sat looking at her with a smile. A moment's observation sufficed. Old Dolly withdrew her eyes and shook her head.

"Well?" said Father Molloy with a significant glance at his brother priests.

"Well! I never *did* see him at home, your reverence! an' I'd have good eyes if I did."

"How is that, Mrs. Sheehan?"

"Why he's no more from the Queen's County than I'm from Jarmany! not but what he's an elegant fine gentleman all out, but if he's a priest, he's not a Queen's County priest, anyhow."

"How do you know that, my good woman?" demanded Father Seward.

"Take care what you say?" whispered Paul.

"Sure I must tell him the truth when he asked me the question," said Dolly back to Paul also in a whisper.

"Why don't you answer the priest?" said Father Daly; "how do you know that he is not from the Queen's County?"

"Well, then, I'll just tell your reverence that—because he's as like a minister as a priest—an' if you didn't tell me, it's for that I'd take him."

"Bother to you for an old goose!" muttered Paul between his teeth, "you've put your foot in it nicely, so you have!"

Father Molloy laughed heartily and Father Daly laid his hand with a smile on the shoulder of his American friend. "You see how it is, my dear sir!" said he, "this good woman has a mark on her own priests."

"So I perceive," returned his friend with the slightest possible curl of his thin lip ; "I should like to know what it is."

"Anan ?" questioned Dolly.

"Tell his reverence," said Father Daly, "what marks and tokens you have on a priest ?"

"Well ! dear knows that's what I couldn't do," said Dolly ; "I know it myself but I couldn't tell it if you were to pay me. Could *you*, Paul ?"

"Don't be botherin' me !" was Paul's curt answer, whereat the priests all laughed and "the marks and tokens" were dropped.

After some further chat with the two originals, during which Father Seward managed to ingratiate himself wonderfully with old Dolly, Paul and she took their leave, with a promise from Father Daly to pay them a visit very soon.

Dropping a low curtsy to each of the priests, Dolly told Father Seward when she came to him, that, indeed, his reverence was more of a priest than a body would think to look at him, and then marched after Paul.

"There's a compliment," said Father Molloy when the door closed on the visitors.

"A rather equivocal one, truly," replied Father Seward as he shook back his long hair, and drew up his shirt-collar ; "if I were only from the Queen's County it would make a wonderful difference !"

"Not so much as you think," said Father Daly ; "it is not the mere accident of birth that influences Dolly in her estimate of you, but the want of those peculiar traits which usually characterize the priest in old Catholic countries."

"And what are they, I pray you ?"

"That's right," said Father Molloy, rubbing his hands in anticipation of renewed hostilities ; "that's right, Father Seward, I'd insist, if I were you, on an explanation."

"No need to insist," said Father Daly with a pleasant smile, "I am quite willing to explain. The characteristics to which

I allude are, perhaps, incompatible with the nature of our American brethren and the construction of society here. That fatherly way of addressing his people, and that homeliness of speech and of manner which wins their confidence and works its way to their hearts, belong more or less to all European priests, but in a peculiar manner to those of the Irish Church, whose relations to their flocks are, if possible, closer and more intimate than any others. The time is far distant—if it ever comes—when the *young-world* priests of American birth will exhibit the marks by which old Dolly and such as she are wont to recognize 'his reverence.' You belong to a new order of things, and a new phase of society, we to an older and less artificial."

"In plain English," said Father Molloy in his humorous way, "you are finer gentlemen and seem to think a deal more of yourselves than we do. Isn't that it, Malachy?"

"Well! I should be sorry to say so," Father Daly replied; "I think I have made myself sufficiently intelligible to our friend."

"Perfectly so," said Father Seward rising, "I know you meant no offence, nor will I take any. Father Patrick here is doing what he can to stir up strife between us, but I warn him he will not succeed." And he shook his finger at Father Molloy with a grave smile.

"Well! I own I was," said the person addressed, "but that was not my *ultimatum*. I thought to kick up a dust so as to have the pleasure of laying it again. But as we can't raise a breeze, why we must only make the most of the calm. Come along in, Father Seward, and have a bit of supper with Malachy and me. There's Jenny, my old housekeeper, beckoning like a ghost, and her patience is none of the best, I can tell you." So saying, he led the way to the supper-table.

## CHAPTER X.

It was no trifle of a job for Bessy Conway to indite such a letter as she wished to send home. She could write a tolerably good hand, but her grammar was not equal to her calligraphy, save and except what orthography had been drummed into her head by old Master Lenihan, late principal of Ardfinnan school, therossest and roughest, yet kindest, withal, that ever wielded "the rod of empire" in village school. Writing a letter was something that Bessy had never been called upon to do at home, and now when she found herself actually sitting down to the performance of that solemn act, the undertaking loomed up before her in awful magnitude. It was easy to say she would write, so long as her promise had reference to the future, but it was quite a different thing when ink and paper were in formidable array before her on the table, and the pen actually in her hand. Had it been to any one else she thought she would never have courage to begin, but as memory brought back the fireside at home, and the group of ever-loved, never-forgotten faces, and the tears that would fall from many eyes at the reading of "Bessy's letter," all her fears vanished, and she set about her task with the greatest alacrity, anxious only to cram as much news about America into the letter as one sheet of paper could well carry. It is true it took two or three evenings to complete the epistle, but when it was completed, she felt quite proud of her success, and was sure they'd all wonder at home to see what a fine letter she could write. "I know they'll be

bringin' it to Father Ryan," said she to herself, "but no matter—I've seen worse letters than it comin' from America. It isn't as bad as Jemmy Hagan's that hardly any one could read a word of, an' it travelled the whole country round, and had to come to Master Lenihan at last, and it took *him* a full hour to make out what was in it."

Consoling herself with the reflection that her letter would not be so hard to decipher as Jemmy Hagan's, Bessy folded it very carefully and put it away unfinished till she had seen the Murphys and Ned Finigan to know what word they had to send home. The letter read as follows, with just a little correction on our part:

"My dear father and mother," it went on, after the usual preliminaries hoping they were all in as good health as *that* left the writer, and so on, "my dear father and mother, I have so many things to tell you that I don't know where to begin. I'd like to let you know all I have seen and heard since I left home, but I'm afraid I can't put it all in one letter. Sometimes I wish you were all here with me, but then again I think to myself that you're far better where you are. To be sure there's a power of money made here, but there's many a one makes it that would be as well without it, for there's a good many of them turns to drink and one thing or another that leaves them worse in a little time than if they never had money to spend. Still there's thousands and thousands of Irish people in this one city that are happy and comfortable with the world flowing in on them, and they say there's some that doesn't know the end of their own riches. That may be, for them that told me wouldn't tell a lie more than the bishop—but as I never saw any of these that have done so well, I can only speak from hearsay. If I didn't see many of the rich, anyway, I have seen plenty of the poor, for I can't go a foot from the door without seeing *them*. To tell you the truth, there's a power of Irish poor in New York, and sorry, sorry I am to say it. And somehow or another, I think

they look more miserable here than the poor did at home. It would go to your heart to see the sights that I see every time I go outside the door—indeed, indeed it would—God break hard fortune before every one! And they tell me I only see a little of it after all, and that there's more misery hid away up in garrets and down in cellars than anybody living knows.\* I hope in God it isn't their own fault. They couldn't all do well, everybody knows that, for, dear knows! I often see Irish people here that you'd wonder what part of Ireland they came from, and sure enough you'd be apt to think it's little business they had to come to America—but still I know myself there's hundreds and hundreds that might do better than they do, if it wasn't for the liquor, as I was tellin' you before. If the Lord would only take that curse from them, and put it out of their way altogether, there's many a one would turn out different. But though there's so many Irish people here in the height of misery, it's a comfort to see how many of them are decent and well off. There's hardly a church in New York where you'll not see a congregation of them with a priest of their own at the altar, and only for the fine churches and the beautiful pictures, and everything that way, I'd forget sometimes that it wasn't at home in Ardfinnan I was with Father Ryan there in his robes before me and the people of our own parish kneeling about me. God knows will I ever see that sight again.

"Ned Finigan has set up a fine public-house with a picture of Ardfinnan Castle over the door, and from that it's called The Castle Inn. I wouldn't know what the picture was myself, but Ned says it's Ardfinnan Castle, and, of course, he knows best. I forgot to tell you that himself and Ally Murphy made a match of it, and I declare to you, Ally looks fine

\* If Bessy Conway were writing now she would have a different story to tell. The misery indeed still exists—it cannot be otherwise in a city like New York, but the deserving poor have found active and devoted friends in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, now established in every part of the city.

and sociable behind the counter—it's the bar *they* call it—and so well she may, for she wears the best of dress, surely. Ned's getting fleshy, I think, and I'm afraid he takes a drop too much now and then, as indeed he can't well help it in the business he's in. They tell me they're making money in hand-fuls, and sure enough they have a fine place of it now, let it turn out as it may.

"Peery Murphy's people are doing pretty well. Peery himself has a dollar a day, they tell me, in a store where he got to be porter, and the boys are earning nearly as much, so, you see, they're getting along finely. Mary has a very good place that she got into a month or so after she landed, but I declare to you she has got to be so proud and has such a conceit out of herself that there is no standing her, all on account of the bit of finery that she was never used to before, so it has fairly turned her head, the creature! If you met her on the road you wouldn't know her from Adam, for it's rattling in her silks she is on a Sunday when she goes out, and a beautiful bonnet and veil that Mrs. Herbert herself might wear, and everything else to match that. And then nothing would serve my lady but she must get her ears pierced and she has drops hanging down a'most to her shoulders. It kills Mary and Ally entirely that they can't get 'the old woman' (that's their mother) to dress up a bit too, but Bridget won't hear to them at all, at all, and you'd die laughing to see how they'll go to the other side of the street from her and Peery because the old woman goes out in her dowdy cap and blue cloth cloak. But indeed it's not often they go out with them, and when they do that's the way they serve them. I'm thinking Mary is not putting much to the fore more than if she was at home in Ardfinnan. She spends all she earns on foolish dress that only makes a show of her, and indeed she's not the only one here that does that, for I know plenty of girls from our own county that have been years and years earning good wages and have nothing to show for it but dress. Some of them haven't even

that, for when a pinch comes on them they have either to sell their things for very little or put them in the pawn, and when they do that, it's seldom they ever get them back. Still there's a good many girls that save money and send plenty home, as you know yourselves, and they say the Irish girls give a great deal of money to the Churches, and are willing to help everything good that is going on. Thank God they're not all as foolish as them I was telling you about, God grant them more sense! If they were all like them there would'n't be so many money-letters going home from America every year that comes.

"And that puts me in mind of my own little penny, in regard to what I'm going to do with it. Mrs. Walters has been a lucky mistress to me, for I have double wages now from her and the lady of the house. I hadn't much clothes to buy since I came here, for my mistress gave me two nice dresses and you know I had a good share from home with me. So I have most of what money I earned to the good, and I'd wish to know if you want any of it at the present time. If not, I can have interest in the Savings Bank for it, Mrs. Walters says, and, of course, it will be getting more every day. Whenever you come short you have only to send me word, and you'll have it by the next post. Now mind and write as soon as ever you get this, for I'll think every day a week 'till I have an answer. And be sure you tell me everything that happened since I left, and how you all are, especially my father, on account of that cough that was troubling him this time back. Let me know did the girls get much of the wool spun, and how many tubs of butter you made since I left. Let me know how my aunt Biddy and her family is, and let me know did Tommy's Pat come to America last harvest as he said he would. Give my best respects to Father Ryan and Father Connelly, and tell them we have fine Irish priests here, just all as one as if we were at home. So no more at present from your loving and affectionate daughter 'til death,

"BESSY CONWAY.



"P. S.—Let me know is my Cousin Catherine still living with Mrs. Herbert at the big house, or is there anything new going on there."

It might be that Bessy's postscript was no exception to postscripts in general, especially ladies' postscripts, which are said to contain the chief point of the letter. However that might be, she blushed as she read it over to herself, and then fixing her eyes abstractedly on the letter she sat for some moments lost in thought, till the voice of Mrs. Walters calling her made her suddenly start from her *reverie*. Hastening down to Mrs. Walters' room she found that lady with an open letter in her hand, and a heightened color on her delicate cheek.

"Bessy!" said she, "I have got news for you."

"Well, ma'am! I hope it's good news."

"That I cannot say," replied Mrs. Walters with a smile; "I am going home next month, Bessy!—I have just had a letter from the Captain—he hopes to be here in two weeks from now, and I am to return with him when he goes."

Bessy's face grew very red, then very pale; her lips quivered and her eyes filled with tears. After trying once or twice to speak, but without success, she cleared her throat several times, and at last faltered out:

"Well! Mrs. Walters dear, I'm sorry to hear it—indeed I am, from my heart out!" and she fairly burst into tears, and covered her face with her hands.

Her mistress laid her hand kindly on her shoulder, and said in a voice that was not free from emotion: "I know you *are* sorry, my poor Bessy! and, indeed, I am sorry to leave you behind, for it may be long before I get another to suit me as you did. But I could not expect you to go back with me; now that you are here, of course you will remain to try your fortune, and I have no doubt at all but you will do well. There is only one thing that makes me fear for you; but never mind now, we can talk of that at another time. Good night, Bessy; say a prayer for me and mine before you sleep."

This was a severe trial for Bessy. She had received much real kindness from Mrs. Walters, and having left home in her service, she was doubly attached to her as a sort of link between the present and the past. She felt that no mistress in America could ever be to her what Mrs. Walters was, and a sense of loneliness chilled her heart, for it seemed as though she were about to lose her only friend, and be left amongst strangers in a strange land.

Then did the voice of the tempter whisper within her, "It's your own fault," repeating the words of Herbert. The warm blood rushed to her cheek and her pulses quickened. "I might be his wife!" she said softly to herself, "he told me so. Why wouldn't I take him at his word?" She sat musing awhile, but her thoughts took a different direction: "Nonsense! Bessy, sure you're no wife for the likes of *him*—it's the devil that's putting such notions in your head!—wouldn't you be a nice daughter-in-law for a grand lady like Mrs. Herbert, and sure you wouldn't know what to do, or how to act, if you were brought home to the big house! Brought home, indeed! I'm sure Master Henry himself never dare show his face there if he'd marry the likes of you, Bessy Conway! and another thing, he's not the right sort, and it wouldn't be for the good of your soul, so put *that* out of your head once for all." She thought of Paul's insinuations, and her heart sank within her; although Henry Herbert could never be anything to her more than he was, she could not bear to think that there was guilt on his soul—that some dark crime hung over him like the shadow of death. No! no! she could not, would not believe it; so fair a seeming could not be so false, or cover a heart scared and blackened with sin!

Captain Walters arrived in due time, and the next two weeks were weeks of bustle and preparation, farewell-parties, and visits P. D. A., as the French have it (*Pour Dire Adieu*—"to say farewell"). There was sorrow, too, in Mrs. Hibbard's house where every one loved Mrs. Walters; even Bridget with all

her crossness and ill-temper had none but the kindest feelings for the gentle English visitor, and old Wash blubbered like a great baby at the thoughts of losing her. "Many a good quarter and fifty-cent piece she gave me," the old man would say, "and she all'as had a kind word for poor Wash. I feel dreadful bad, I do! Wish the Cap'n hadn't come!" As this somewhat selfish aspiration was only heard by the girls it served to amuse them, however the captain might have taken it, or Mrs. Walters. As for Bessy she could hardly raise her head during those two long weeks, and many a heavy sigh attested the grief of her heart.

To Bessy's great surprise one day the Captain asked her where the hunchback could be found, and she blushed as she gave the required information, she knew not why. That very evening Paul was surprised by a visit from Captain Walters whom he was very glad to see safe back. Dolly was not in at the time, and the Captain, being in a hurry, at once proceeded to business.

"I came" said he, "at the request of my wife to ask if you know where that Herbert is to be found."

"Well! I can soon find it out for you, Captain," said Paul looking up inquiringly in his face; "but what's wrong now, your honor? has the mistress found out any thing new?"

"Not exactly *new*—he came to the house soon after I left and asked to see Bessy, but Mrs. Walters sent him away without his errand, and gave him some wholesome advice. Since then she has heard nothing of him except that he was seen sometimes walking up and down in front of the house. Have you seen anything of him?"

"Nothing worth speakin' of, your honor!—but is it true you're going to take Mrs. Walters home with you this time?"

"True enough, Paul! don't you think it was time? But that is just what brought me now. Mrs. Walters wishes to leave Bessy Conway particularly in *your* charge—the only

danger she apprehends for her is from Herbert, and she thinks you have a check on him that no one else has."

"Maybe I have, your honor, maybe I haven't,—howsomever," and he nodded significantly, "we'll do our best—I say we'll do our best, Captain!"

"Well! I'll tell you what you'll do," said Captain Walters with his hand on the door; "when you find him out, tell him I want to see him immediately—*immediately*, remember!"

"Never fear, your honor! I'll remember!"

"Lest he should neglect coming," said the Captain, "tell him it's on a business of importance to himself. Good-bye, Paul! I'm sorry I can't wait to see Mrs. Sheehan of whose good fortune I heard with much pleasure. Tell her so, will you? I am always glad to hear of the *Garrick* people doing well."

"I don't misdoubt you, Captain," said Paul by way of a compliment, and the Captain laughed as he hurried down stairs, Paul hobbling after him with all the speed he could make. "But I say, Paul!" cried the Captain turning on the first landing as the thought struck him, "I say, what's come of 'the biggest man on board?'"

"Oh! your honor means Ned Finigan!—he's well enough, and growing mighty fat, as well he may! he's keeping a liquor store, Captain!"

"Oh!—ah!—a liquor store!—hum!—the very thing that fits him!—I *thought* he hadn't much taste for hard work!—good bye again, my little man!—lose no time in doing what I told you!"

In the course of half an hour Paul might be seen in close conversation with his friend Mike Milligan at the corner of Duane street, where the old Shakspeare Hotel jutted out in a sharp angle.

"And you're sure you can find him?" said Paul.

"Can I find *you*?" retorted the precocious juvenile, which significant interrogatory of course satisfied Paul's doubts.

"Where is he, then?"

"Not far off, I guess!" said Mike with a grin, and he pointed over his shoulder.

"Oh! it's there, is it?"

"Well! he don't live there, but I saw him go in a little while ago—would you like to see him?"

"Yes! but I don't want to go in. You must get him out, if you can."

"I'll do it!" said Mike, and in he went to the bar-room, with his parrot-like cry "*Daily Herald!* Buy a paper, sir!—buy a paper!"

One of the first that bought a paper was Henry Herbert who sat moodily in a corner listening to something that Dixon was telling him in a low earnest tone. Dixon was much annoyed at the newsboy's interruption, and turning fiercely bade him "go to the d——!"

"I'd rather you'd go yourself, sir!"

"Get out of here, or I'll ring your ear for you!"

"I guess you'd better not," said the provoking imp, "there's M. P.'s about!" And with a mocking grimace away ran Mike, having pocketed the cents for Herbert's paper, and made him a sign, moreover, that he was wanted outside.

Twenty minutes after, Captain Walters and Henry Herbert sat *tête-à-tête* in Mrs. Hibbard's front parlor. The light from a triple chandelier suspended from the ceiling fell full on Herbert's face, and muttering something about "weak eyes" he slightly changed his position so that his face was partially shaded.

"I was told you wished to see me, Captain Walters!" said Herbert with a sort of nervous tremor in his voice which he vainly tried to conceal as the frank, manly Englishman fixed his eyes upon him.

"So I did, Mr Herbert."

"May I ask why?"

"Certainly you may. I wished to speak to you on a matter

which no way concerns myself, but much concerns you. Mrs. Walters returns with me to England in a few days.'

"Well, sir!"

"Well, sir! she has a servant-maid—by name Bessy Conway—with whom I believe Mr. Herbert is not unacquainted!"

"Excuse me, Captain Walters!"

"Excuse me, Mr. Herbert; pray allow me to finish what I was about to say!" Herbert bowed, and the Captain went on:

"You are also probably aware that this young girl is a sort of *protégée* of my wife, who, indeed, prevailed upon her to come to America. She fears—mark me, Mr. Herbert—Mrs. Walters fears to leave her behind without any protection, for the girl is young, and unusually good-looking for one in her station."

"Ha! Captain Walters has found *that* out!" Herbert exclaimed with a flushed cheek.

"Pardon me, Mr. Herbert!" said the Englishman coldly, "I allow no such insinuations—there is but one woman in the world on whom my eyes rest with pleasure. I repeat, this young girl is handsome—well for her, perhaps, if she were not—she is the more likely to attract the eyes of the libertine. Mrs. Walters cannot advise her—cannot *ask* her to go home again with her fortune untried, yet she shrinks from the responsibility of leaving her behind."

Herbert's face was too expressive to answer the purpose of dissimulation. He tried hard to look bold and unconcerned, but it would not do. He spoke, however, what he could not look.

"In what way does this concern me, Captain Walters?"

"You know that yourself, Mr. Herbert! so do I." Herbert changed color and bit his lip. "Suffice it to say, we understand each other on that head, although I, for my part, cannot understand why a young man possessed of your advantages does not fly higher."

"I was not aware," said Herbert, with an incredulous smile, "that Captain Walters entertained so high an opinion of me."

"How high or how low is not now the question, Mr. Herbert; my time is very limited, and you will pardon me if I speak more plainly than you may relish. What are your intentions with regard to Bessy Conway?"

"Well, upon my honor! Captain Walters, it is a singular question from you to me! Suppose I decline answering such a question?"

"In that case," said Captain Walters, "I should feel myself under the necessity of informing your father, Wilson Herbert, of Ardfinnan, Ireland, late of Birmingham, England——"

"Really!" interrupted Herbert in a sarcastic tone, "you know my father better than——"

"Better than you do," said the Captain significantly. "Had I time, and did it suit my purpose, I could tell you things about your father which, if generally known, would unsettle his tenure of that Tipperary estate of his. I confess myself an interested party, and one day or another when I have nothing better to do I may examine his title-deeds by the light of certain documents which are registered and in safe keeping in England. I see you understand me. Well! what remains for me to say is this: if you have one particle of feeling for your father—for your mother—and desire to keep off *disgrace* as long as possible from your family, you will let Bessy Conway alone, for I tell you the day that I hear of your renewing your attempts to seduce her from the path of virtue—that very day will seal your father's doom, and draw down upon him the punishment he well deserves. I hope you now understand how this matter concerns *you*?" he added ironically.

Herbert rose from his seat pale as death, his lips trembling with the passion which he dared not express in words. He looked fiercely at Captain Walters and the fingers of his right hand clutched at empty space and then closed as if convulsively. He rested that hand on the back of the chair from which he had risen, and looked the captain steadily in the face. All this being done, he answered very slowly

"Yes, I understand—you mean to say that we are all in your power!"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"Oh! very well, Captain Walters!—it is rather hard, but I suppose it can't be helped."

"Pardon me—it *can* be helped—and by you," said the Captain with emphasis. "I have told you how. Observe the conditions, and you shall not find me a hard task-master. You will remember—will you not?"

"I shall not forget," Herbert replied with a strange smile, and he moved towards the door,—having reached it he turned and spoke again:

"Have the goodness to tell Mrs. Walters," said he, "that I have not forgotten what she told me when I saw her last—I have battled bravely with temptation for so far, unaided and alone—God knows how long I may be able to resist, for the world is trying me sorely. Captain Walters! I have given *you* no promise—remember that!—I wish you, sir, good night!" he bowed with cold and haughty politeness, and then let himself out as if fearful of hearing more.

"Upon my word and honor!" said the Captain to himself, as he stood a moment looking after him, "upon my word and honor! there is no accounting for tastes—now *can* such a young fellow as that think seriously of little Bessy?"

If Captain Walters had seen the look of anguish on Herbert's face when he took Bessy's hand for a moment at the door he need not have asked the question.

"Farewell, Bessy! farewell!" said he, and he squeezed her hand very hard, while she looked up in his face with astonishment depicted on every feature; "they will drive me to ruin," said the young man in a hoarse whisper, "they will break the one link that binds me still to virtue—*that is you!*—Bessy! Bessy! my brain is burning and my heart is breaking—would that I were dead!"

"Master Henry dear! what ails you at all?" said Bessy



anxiously, and the tears stood in her eyes. "Are you sick, or what's the matter with you?"

"No, no, I'm well enough—too well!—God bless you!—I would bless you, but my blessing might prove a curse!—farewell! farewell!"

Raising the hand which he still held he pressed it for a moment to his throbbing brow, then dashing it from him, he pulled the door open and darted out. He was speedily lost to Bessy's view in the shadow flung by the tall old trees over the moonlight street without.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE day of parting came at last, and Bessy was permitted as a special favor to go in the carriage with the Hibbard family to see Mrs. Walters on board the *Garrick*. Many friends were there, and many kind wishes were exchanged, and people were coming and going to the very last. The Hibbards were amongst the last to leave the vessel, and Bessy Conway lingered behind whilst her mistress spoke with the Captain and his officers. Mrs. Walters had kindly promised to go and see Denis Conway and his wife as soon as she returned to Carrick, where she meant to spend part of the following summer, and Bessy stood drowned in tears, with Mrs. Walters' two hands clasped between her own whilst she poured out the sorrow, and the love, and the gratitude that filled her heart. Suddenly another voice spoke behind her, it was that of Henry Herbert:

"Mrs. Walters," said he, "you will excuse me, I hope, for intruding myself upon you at a moment sacred to friendship and to grief. I could not allow you to depart without assuring you once again that I am deeply grateful for the generous interest you have been pleased to take in a forlorn cast-away like myself. I make no professions—people would not believe me if I did—at least it seems so—but oh! believe me, I am the creature of circumstances. My whole life has been unfavorable to the growth of virtue—no genial sunshine, no softening dew has fallen on my heart to fructify the germ of good

that nature, or nature's God implanted in it—this you cannot understand, and there is no time now for explanations—permit me once more to thank you most sincerely, and to wish you a safe and pleasant voyage. If we never meet again I shall remember you as one who spoke kindly and encouragingly to the poor outcast——”

Bessy had retreated to a corner, and her sobs went to Mrs. Walters' heart. Herbert turned quickly and fixed his eyes upon her with a sorrowful expression.

“Ay! she may weep,” he said to Mrs. Walters, “she loves you and you were kind to her. She will find few to treat her as you did—to appreciate her as you did. I know her value, and I would cherish her as a tender flower, but she will not have it so—she flies me as though I were a serpent,—and others view me through a still darker medium! Mrs. Walters! I do not complain, but I must say that some whom you know have not used me well—but no matter now—a time may come,—if they only left me, Bessy, I could bear all, and the world might be the gainer—now I am like a boat sent adrift on a stormy ocean without pilot or rudder—farewell!”

“Farewell, Mr. Herbert!” said Mrs. Walters with deep feeling; “farewell! and may God give you strength to resist temptation, and follow the instincts of your better nature!—there—shake hands with Bessy now—and go quickly—you have but a moment!”

Bessy came forward with downcast eyes, and Herbert taking her hand looked a moment on her drooping tearful face, then sighed heavily, and dropping the hand he held left the cabin without a word. Mrs. Walters looked at Bessy—the color had left her cheek and she was trembling with suppressed emotion.

“Bessy! Bessy! take care!” said the lady in a kind and soothing tone, “I know and feel that your trial is a hard one—but you *must* persevere—all that your friends can do will not save you, unless you act firmly and—keep *him* at a distance!”

Let no promises, no persuasions induce you to listen to him—were his intentions all that he says, you would be none the happier for being his wife, knowing the light in which his family would regard you. Remember what I tell you, Bessy, and you will never be sorry for taking my advice. You must hurry away now, for I hear the Captain calling to me that Mrs. Hibbard is going. Good-bye, Bessy! good-bye! I expect you to write to me very soon and I will answer your letter. . God bless you, my dear girl! and may His mighty arm protect you from all danger!"

Bessy's heart was too full for words, but she pressed Mrs. Walters' hand again and again, and raised her eyes to heaven invoking a blessing on her head, then silently followed Mrs. Hibbard to the deck, and had barely time to say "good-bye" to the Captain when her mistress left the vessel, and they joined the crowd on shore who were waiting to see the *Garwick* sail. When the final moment came and the stately ship elbowed her way out through the throng of merchant craft representing almost every nation of the earth, Bessy felt as if she were alone in the world and the half-forgotten sorrow of a former parting was renewed in her mind. Small comfort did she find in the shining gold piece which Mrs. Walters had slipped into her hand at parting. "It will do for a keepsake," was her sorrowful thought as she looked at its jaunty liberty-cap and its emblematic stars, then kissed it and laid it carefully away in the tiny silk purse which the fair hands of Mrs. Walters had fabricated expressly for her use.

Mrs. Hibbard did her best to console Bessy, and to replace the kind mistress she had lost. But somehow she never got so far into Bessy's heart as her kindness would seem to warrant. She was a very good woman as the world goes, and meant well at all times, but there was a want of steadiness in her disposition that amounted at times to caprice, and there was also a listless indifference to the affairs of others that looked very like selfishness, if anything else it could be called. Consequently she

could never be to Bessy what Mrs. Walters had been, and that the poor girl soon found out with a sinking heart. Still Mrs. Hibbard was strongly impressed with a sense of justice and desired, moreover, to make friends of her domestics if she only knew how to set properly about it. She knew very well when she was well served, and endeavored to encourage by every means in her power those whom she found faithful in the discharge of their duty. To Bessy, therefore, she was uniformly kind, and made it a practice to hold her up as an example to others, a favor with which Bessy could well have dispensed, for she knew that it vexed and annoyed her fellow-servants without at all benefiting her.

Bridget had no patience with her mistress for what she considered this unjust partiality, and she never took any pains to conceal her discontent. She contrived to make the kitchen so uncomfortable to Bessy that she spent no more time in it than was actually necessary. Still she did not complain to Mrs. Hibbard, fearing a violent concussion which would end in Bridget's expulsion. But old Wash was not so forbearing—he thought he had borne too long, and so he made it his business to lodge a formal complaint against Bridget, telling his mistress that he could live no longer in the same house with her.

After breakfast next morning Bridget was sent for to the sitting-room, and Mrs. Hibbard asked her how it happened that she made the place so disagreeable to her fellow-servants. This reused Bridget's ire, and instead of giving any satisfactory answer, she launched out into a violent tirade against the house and every one in it, man, woman and child. Mrs. Hibbard tried in vain to stop her, saying that there was no need for loud talk or angry words, but she might as well have tried to stop the rushing avalanche of the Alps or Apennines in its downward course. Everything was said by Bridget that could possibly annoy her mistress, and she wound up by telling her that she didn't know a good girl from a bad one.

"Any bog-trotter that comes the way will suit you as well

as a girl that knows her business. I an't used to that, Mrs. Hibbard, and I tell you I shan't stand it any longer. I'm no greenhorn, Mrs. Hibbard! nor I'm no stranger in New York, thanks be to God—I have had good places, Mrs. Hibbard! not all as one, and I know what good places are, and I an't a-going to be walked over by any one—I'll leave to-morrow, Mrs. Hibbard!—there!"

"Then we are both of one mind, Bridget!" said Mrs. Hibbard quietly and coldly; "that is just what I wanted to tell you. There are two weeks past of the present month, for which time I will pay you when you are ready to leave."

"Well! Mrs. Hibbard, it's very hard"—began Bridget in an altered tone—she had had no idea that her mistress would take her at her word.

"I have nothing more to say to you, Bridget," said Mrs. Hibbard walking away; "you leave to-morrow forenoon."

So it was that Bridget lost a place which she knew in her heart was as good as any in New York. She blustered a great deal in the kitchen, and boasted over and over that she didn't care a snap for Mrs. Hibbard or any one else, "only in fair play;" she abused Bessy and old Wash till, as Bessy said, "a dog wouldn't lick their blood," but neither of them made her an answer, and, indeed, they kept out of her way as much as possible, so the day passed over without any more serious catastrophe than the breaking of a kitchen bowl which Bridget flung out of her hand in one of her "tantrums."

Next morning she left the house, refusing the half month's wages which was her due, and threatening to make Mrs. Hibbard pay her month in full, as she turned her away without any reason at all but just to please that spiteful old nigger, and that nasty little piece of consequence, Bessy Conway. Ellen was favored with a good-bye, together with a parting admonition to take care of herself, for her turn would come next.

"Smooth water runs deep, Ellen," said Bridget with an em-

phatic shake of the head; "you see they never stopped till they got *me* out, and they'll serve you the same trick, depend upon it. I'd advise you to get pious, and thump your craw, and turn up the whites of your eyes now and then like a duck in thunder—when you think folks are looking at you. That's the way to get along, and—do you hear, Ellen!" she added with a mischievous glance at Bessy, "if you only do that you needn't be partic'lar as to what you do behind-backs—voteens can take a longer tether to themselves than they're willing to give to others."

Ellen put this broad hint off with a laugh, but Bessy looked very grave, and felt strongly tempted to make a severe retort on Bridget. A moment's thought, however, served to show her how worse than useless this would be, and she allowed Bridget to depart without any allusion to what had been said.

Mrs. Hibbard had advertised for a cook the evening before, and of six or eight who presented themselves in the morning, she engaged a tall, thin, and rather delicate looking young woman named Fanny Powers. Mrs. Hibbard was almost afraid to take her, fearing that her strength might not be equal to what she undertook, but Fanny appeared so confident, and looked so tidy and so amiable, moreover, that there was no possibility of doubting her capacity or her willingness. She was, therefore, inaugurated as cook and laundress, and her fellow-servants were all prepossessed by her appearance.

Indeed, nothing could exceed the order and neatness with which Fanny went through her work, and, of course, the comfort of the family was wonderfully increased. Her mildness and good sense were equally remarkable in her intercourse with her fellow-servants, so that, in all respects, she seemed a most valuable acquisition to the household.

Bessy Conway, in particular, regarded the new-comer with admiration, and esteemed herself fortunate in obtaining such a companion, for she found that Fanny was extremely pious,

and loved going to church beyond anything else in the whole world. She could not live, she said, without going to church regularly, and she wouldn't take the best place in New York where she couldn't get going as often as she wished.

A happy girl was Bessy when, on the first night after Fanny's arrival, the two knelt together to say their beads, and after a little persuasion, and some good-natured laughing, Ellen was at last persuaded to join them.

"Surely we're all right now," said Bessy to herself as she laid her head on the pillow that night. Undoubtedly things looked bright, but Bessy had yet to learn the truth of the old saying: "All is not gold that glitters."

Things had gone on very smoothly and fairly for about a week, and every one was happy in the restored peace of the mansion. Old Wash spent more of his time in the kitchen than he had done for many a month, and it was a pleasure to see him as he sat at an evening by the brightly-polished range, looking alternately, with a broad grin of satisfaction, at the clear fire and the shining tea-kettle on top, and the sedate countenance of the new cook as she sat at the table hard by making a dress for herself. The old man thought he had never felt so comfortable, and so he told Fanny who, of course, took all the merit to herself, and thanked Wash for his good opinion.

It was a real pleasure for Bessy, too, to bring down her work to the kitchen, in the evening after tea, or perhaps read some pious or entertaining book while Fanny worked. And the old nigger pricked up his ears and listened—he had never heard Catholic books read before and he seemed to think them the strangest reading that ever was. As a general thing he sat listening in silence, mouth and eyes open, to catch the words whose meaning was so mystical to him. Now and then, however, he would break out in exclamations of surprise, and his running comment on what reached his ear was amusing to the girls, though at times they had to call him to account



when his remarks, whether intentionally or not, made irreverently free with sacred things.

This was all very pleasant while it lasted. The stream running so beautifully clear no one in the world could suppose that there was mud to be stirred up from the bottom very soon that would discolor the sparkling water and make trouble where all was peace and contentment.

Eight or nine days after Fanny came, there was a sermon to be preached on Sunday evening, in St. Mary's Church, and Fanny calculated so certainly on being present that she was full of it all the week, and could hardly speak of anything else.

She grew quite eloquent while giving an account to Bessy of sermons she had heard preached by the same eminent clergyman.

"Well! I declare," said Bessy innocently, "you were very lucky to be able to hear so many fine sermons."

"I guess I was," said Fanny, "but somehow I always make *that* out wherever I am."

"See that now!—the old saying over again: 'where there's a will there's a way.'"

There wasn't "a way" on *that* occasion, for when Sunday afternoon came round, Fanny received orders to have some supper ready for a few friends whom Mrs. Hibbard had invited to come home with her after evening service.

When Bessy went into the kitchen a little while after, she was surprised to see Fanny sitting there crying as if her heart would break.

"My goodness, Fanny dear! what's the matter with you?"

Fanny could not answer at first, but went on sobbing most piteously.

"Lord bless me!" said Bessy again in great alarm, "what's come over you at all, Fanny?—did you hear of any death?"

"N—n—no! I didn't," sobbed Fanny, "but—but—but——"

"But what?"

"I—I—can't—can't—get out this evening——"

"Well! what of that?"

"Why I shan't hear—hear Father P——'s—sermon!"

With all Bessy's good-nature she could not help laughing.

"Why, then, Fanny, is that all that ails you?"

"I guess it's about enough," replied Fanny very sharply;  
"I don't see what you've got to laugh at, really!"

"Well! after that"—and Bessy held up her hands in utter amazement—"after that I'm sure I'll not wonder at anything."

"You won't, eh?—dear me!" ejaculated Fanny rather disdainfully, as Bessy thought, for such a pious person.

In the meantime Fanny had dried up her tears, and Bessy went on: "Well! do you know, Fanny, I'm surprised at you—indeed I am—to let your mind be disturbed at such a trifle as that."

"Trifle, indeed! it ain't a trifle, I tell you, to be disappointed like that!"

"I wish you may never have more cause to cry!" said Bessy; "if you don't you'll come off safe enough!"

"Now will you just keep your chat to yourself?" said Fanny, with increasing ill-humor; "I an't in a state of mind to bear much at the present time, I can tell you!"

"Why, Fanny! Fanny! where's your patience gone to? Sure I often heard you say that it was a fine thing for people to have trials and troubles in this world, for that every one would be a crown to them in heaven;—it seems you don't want to make a crown of this trial, anyhow."

But Fanny was quite too angry to listen to reason. "Well! it an't any use talking," she exclaimed petulantly, "if I'm vexed it an't without good reason. I guess St. Peter himself couldn't bear it patiently!"

"Well! I think he could," said Bessy with a smile, "and I'm sure of it, too, for I couldn't bear what St. Peter bore, I'm afraid, and I could bear this disappointment of yours as easy as could be."

"That may be," retorted Fanny, with a look so cynical and

sour that Bessy could hardly believe her eyes; "some an't as anxious to hear sermons as others."

"Well! *I* can say for myself," said Bessy, still smiling, "that there's no one likes better to hear instructions than I do,—but still I'd never fret about missing *one* sermon; if I did, I'd be afraid that I wasn't profitting much by them that I *did* hear."

On this Fanny bridled up, and her eyes actually flashed fire. "I'd thank you, Bessy Conway, to keep your opinion till it is asked for, and it will be a long day before *I* ask it, take my word for it."

"Well! sure you needn't be vexed with me, anyhow," said Bessy mildly; "it isn't my fault that you're kept in from church."

"I don't say it is, Bessy!" rejoined Fanny, a little softened, "but I'm real angry with Mrs. Hibbard."

"Well! I don't see why you should. Is it because she wants supper for three or four of her friends? Hasn't she a right to get what she wants in her own house?"

"Nobody says she han't," exclaimed Fanny with renewed warmth, "but it's the least a girl that's working like a slave all week should have Sunday evening to herself!" and again Fanny burst into a passionate flood of tears. "Here I've to go to work amongst pots and saucepans instead of going to Church like a Christian to hear the word of God! It's too bad, and I've a great mind to put on my things and go off to Church—"

"And lose your place to-morrow morning?"

"I don't care a cent about the place! I'd rather be for half wages where I could save my soul!"

Seeing the state of nervous excitement into which Fanny had worked herself, Bessy was driven to her wit's end, and knew not well what to say. Still she felt as though she ought to say something.

"Well! I don't know how it may be with *you*," said she,

"but for my part, I think I can save my soul here as well as if I was in a nunnery;—and do you know what, Fanny! maybe you're doing more for your soul among the pots and saucepans to-night than I am." They were sitting in a pew in St. Mary's Church listening to Father P——."

"How so, pray?"

"Why, because you'd be doing your own will if you went to Church, but it's God's will for you to stay at your work, when the mistress wants you."

"Well, upon *my* word!" ejaculated Fanny in high disdain, "things are come to a pretty pass with us when a bit of a greenhorn undertakes to lecture us like that!"

"I hope you'll not take it ill of me," said Bessy mildly; "even if I am a greenhorn, as you say, that doesn't prevent me from knowing how to save my soul. There's as good Christians where I came from, thanks be to God, as there is anywhere else."

"Good gracious!" cried Fanny, glancing at the clock, "there it's seven o'clock, and I han't got a thing done, not even my tea-dishes washed!"

"Well! if *you'll* go on with your cooking," said Bessy, "I'll wash the dishes for you."

This welcome proposal restored Fanny's good humor, at least to a certain extent, and although she kept sighing at intervals all the evening as she thought of Father P——'s sermon, she said no more about it, for Wash came in soon after, and Bessy took care to keep other subjects afloat, so that the evening passed away without any further allusion to the exciting topic of Fanny's disappointment.

But the girls were never on the same terms after that evening. The bond of sympathy was broken between them, and their mutual confidence was much diminished if not entirely destroyed. Bessy's faith in Fanny had received a severe shock, and the subdued mildness, or rather calmness of her exterior no longer impressed her as it had done. She had dis-

covered that a deep strata of human pride lay beneath the modest and humble exterior, and that angry passions were smouldering beneath the cold surface, awaiting but occasion to fan them to a blaze.

During the following week, Bessy went up to see Mrs. Finigan. She found the Castle Inn and every one in it in a state of exuberant hilarity. The merry sound of the fiddle was heard from the large room off the bar, mingled with snatches of songs and "voices in their glee," and laughter that rang pleasantly on the ear. Ally was behind the bar with Ned, and both seemed as though their hearts were overflowing with content and they revelling in the sense of fortune's favors. They were both glad to see Bessy, and Ally, inviting her in behind the bar, told her she was just in time for a dance.

"How is that, Mrs. Finigan?"

"Well! the club meets to-night, you know, and they have elegant music and everything first-rate."

"What's the club?"

"Why, the Smoking Club, to be sure. I thought you knew all about it. They meet here once a week."

"Well! but what have I to do with them?" inquired Bessy.

"Bad cess to you, Bessy, is there ne'er a spree in you, at all? Didn't I tell you you were just in for a dance, and its what you question me like a lawyer."

"Why, Ally, do you think I'd go in among a room full of people that's all strangers to me, and step out on the floor before them all? Sure enough I'd be fond of a dance when I'd do that!"

"Don't be botherin' me now with your airs!" and Ally gave her a push in sportive mood. "Won't Ned go in with you himself, and its glad enough the boys will be to get such a partner! why our Mary comes every meeting night and she wouldn't miss the fun for anything! Come here, Ned!"

Ned came accordingly and joined his persuasions to Ally's,

but Bessy was proof against them all. They were forced to leave her to go to their business, and Ned especially was very angry, knowing what a stir her pretty modest face would make in the club-room.

"You may go to the mischief, then!" he said testily as he hurried back to the bar; "if Herbert was there, she'd go in a minute," he added in an under tone, "but her own aquals aren't good enough for her ladyship since she has a squiween running after her!"

Vexed as Ally was, she gave Bessy a seat near where she was standing. "But maybe you'd rather go up stairs," said she in an ironical tone, "my mother is above."

Bessy was rather amused, however, by the view which she had of the club-room through the open door, and she said she would wait a little where she was before she went up to see Mrs. Murphy. It was, indeed, a scene where mirth and jollity abounded, and where the hilarious elasticity of the Celtic nature was strikingly manifested. The Smoking Club of that day is now with the past, for twenty years throws many a custom off the stage of popular favor into the gulf of things obsolete.

At the room-door sat an odd-looking genius with the drollest expression of countenance and that ceaseless flow of humor only to be found amongst those of his class and country. This individual held a plate on which was deposited, by each one on entering, the silver key which obtained him admission, in the likeness of a York shilling. Each member, it seemed, had the privilege of bringing a partner, and the pile of shillings on the plate was appropriated, first of all to paying the musicians, the remainder to be spent at the bar in refreshments for the company. The smoking-members had another room appropriated to themselves, their pipes and tobacco—segars were held in sovereign contempt, and by common consent excluded the club-room.

Bessy enjoyed the fun mightily for some time. The whole scene was familiar, and as she watched each

“—— dancing pair that simply sought renown  
By holding out to tire each other down,”

and the merry antics of the young men and the simpering shyness of the girls, as they gaily footed the floor to the tune of “The Rocky Road to Dublin,” or “Jackson’s Morning Brush,” or some other traditional favorite, she could almost forget the thousands of miles that lay between her and “the big barn” where many a time she tripped it on the bare earthen floor. When the recollection of where she was did recur to her mind, a sigh and a tear were given to the lightsome heart and the homely joys of that Auld Lang Syne which seemed to have fallen a score of years back into the past, though Bessy’s years were but a score.

It soon got about in the room that “old Denis Conway’s daughter from Ardfinnan” was somewhere in the vicinity, and one after another, full half a dozen “Tipperary boys” made their bow and scrape before her, asking the pleasure of her company to dance. Bessy was fain to refuse them all, but no one could take offence, her smile was so sweet, and her excuses so plausible.

She was just thinking of going up stairs, when a well known voice, speaking to Ned at the bar, made her turn quickly, and there she saw Henry Herbert, his face flushed either with liquor or some strong excitement. He had just come in, accompanied by a tall showy man, whom Bessy recognized with a sinking heart as the same who had so impudently accosted her that well-remembered night in Chatham square.

The pair of friends were passing on to the smaller room adjoining the club-room, and Ned Finigan looked anxiously round in search of Bessy. To his great relief no Bessy was there.

## CHAPTER XII.

BESSY had been proposing to herself for some time to go to see Mary Murphy, who had been two or three times to see *her*. On the Thursday evening after her visit to Ned Finigan's, she went up after tea to Houston street, and was lucky enough to find Mary in, though dead tired, she said, after being at a dance the night before. She was very glad to see Bessy, and so, indeed, was Becky, her staid and sober fellow-servant, "a hardy girl," as they say in Ireland, but a very respectable servant, upright and conscientious.

Mary was nodding and yawning over a towel which she was supposed to be hemming, whilst Becky was cleaning her silver. Bessy's entrance was very welcome to both, for Becky had no objection to a bit of chat once in a while, and Mary was glad of anything that would keep her from falling asleep.

"Well! I'm real glad to see you," said Mary, "but, la me! what a figure you are! I wonder you an't ashamed to come out of an evening in a calico dress!"

Bessy smiled and looked down with a perfectly satisfied air at the neat chintz calico which looked bright and clean and very pretty under her dark shawl.

"Mary, how can you talk like that?" exclaimed Becky; "now that's about the prettiest calico I've seen in a long time. It's real neat."

"Neat, indeed!" said Mary with infinite contempt, "it might do well enough for the morning when folks are at their work, but you wouldn't catch *me* going out so of an evening."



"I guess not," said Becky with great composure, "but that an't any rule for folks that have more sense. I guess Bessy makes a better use of her money than putting it on her back in silk and satin."

"Do you hear her now?" cried Mary thoroughly roused from her drowsy fit, "she talks just so all the blessed time—but I needn't blame her—it's only natural."

Mary coughed affectedly and glanced meaningly at Becky's remarkably plain face.

"For shame, Mary dear! for shame!" whispered Bessy, purposely avoiding the direction of Mary's wicked eye.

But Mary only laughed and sang with provoking emphasis:

"Nobody coming to marry me,  
Nobody coming to woo,  
Nobody coming to marry me,  
Oh dear! what shall I do?"

Bessy was ashamed to look at the cook, and she glanced reprovingly at Mary, but such scenes were of too frequent occurrence to excite much feeling on either part. Becky rubbed away harder than ever at her plate, but she soon paused to ask Bessy how she liked her new mistress—she had heard from Mary of Mrs. Walters' departure and Bessy's engagement with Mrs. Hibbard.

"I like her very well," said Bessy, "she is a very good mistress."

"How often does she let you out?" put in Mary.

"Twice a week if I choose to go—that is, Sunday and any day through the week that's most convenient. But I don't always go out when it's my turn. Unless when I have some very particular reason I don't care for going out in the evenings. I'd sooner do some sewing either for myself or Mrs. Hibbard."

"Sewing indeed!" cried Mary with her disdainful curl of the lip, "I'd see any mistress far enough before I'd stay in and sew for her when it was my turn out!"

"No one would ever suspect you of such a thing," said Becky drily, "so you needn't take any pains to let us know it. I guess you'd rather be dancing jigs down to your brother-in-law's, or trotting from one *shin-dig* to another keeping me out of my bed till eleven or twelve o'clock waiting for you. There an't any chance of *your* sewing much evenings when you can get out."

"I leave that to you and the likes of you," said Mary in a saucy yet not ill-natured tone, for she knew that Becky meant what she said for her good. "I wouldn't be seen doing what you're doing anyhow; if I engaged to do Mrs. Graham's work, I didn't engage to spend my evenings at it, and I won't, either, I'm determined."

"Bessy!" said the cook, "do girls in place talk and act so in Ireland?"

"What does *she* know whether they do or not?" put in Mary; "neither she nor I ever lived out till we came to America!"

"If I didn't," said Bessy, "I know how girls acted that *did* live out, and as Becky put the question to me I must tell her the truth: a servant girl in Ireland that would be seen going on as some of them do here would be put in a strait-jacket, and taken off to a madhouse. Indeed she would, Becky! and Mary knows that as well as I do if she'd only say so."

Mary shook her fist at Bessy with a playful air, and Becky asked in a tone of great interest: "They don't dress up as they do here—do they?"

"Dress up! why no, they dress decently and plainly, in the way that they think is becoming to their station. If a servant-girl went out in a silk dress, with feathers or flowers in her bonnet, she'd be made a show of before she'd get in, and as for the boys, why! there wouldn't one of them look the side she'd be in—the rich farmer's sons, even, wouldn't like to marry a girl that wore such finery, for the reason that they'd think she'd make a poor wife. No, no, Becky! the servant-girls in

Ireland have more sense than be laying out all they earn on foolish clothes that would only make people laugh at them when they'd have them on. And I often heard Mrs. Herbert say, Mary! that it's just the same in England, and that numbers of servant-girls make good matches among the farmers and tradesmen, and even shop-keepers, just because they're so neat and tidy and plain in their dress, and so fond of saving up their money."

Hearing this, Becky nodded triumphantly at Mary. "There! if that an't just what I often told Mary. As girls dress up here, why the young men are afraid to have anything to do with them. What prospect is it for a man earning a few dollars a week to marry a dressed-up doll of a girl without a cent in her pocket or anything better to begin housekeeping with than a couple of showy flare-up dresses, a bonnet to match, and a stylish sunshade?"

The tone in which Becky said this made the girls laugh, but Mary jumping to her feet gave her a smart slap on the shoulder: "Will you not be bothering us, now, with your old palavers? Husht! is that the parlor bell?"

It was, and Mary ran up stairs where she remained some time, during which Becky took the opportunity to have a talk with Bessy about her friend.

"I kind of like Mary," said the precise New England woman, "and I've bin a-trying ever since she came to teach her how to do her work as it ought to be done. At first I thought she was going to be a real nice tidy girl, but"—and Becky shook her head emphatically—"I find there an't the least use in trying to get her into my own ways."

"Well! it's very strange," said Bessy thoughtfully; "you'd think a girl that has such taste for dressing herself would have a taste for keeping every thing neat and clean about her."

Becky smiled with a sort of patronizing air as she replied: "I guess if you were as long looking at help-girls as I have bin you wouldn't speak like that. Bless you, child! I never

saw a stuck-up, dandified young woman in place that wan't real untidy about her work. I've seen them go out in rich silk dresses and every thing on them in first-rate style, and to see them about their work they'd be more like scarecrows than any thing else—so dirty that you'd hate to see them around the house. Many a time I wished that the beaux they were so fond of talking of could only get a peep at them then—my stars! wouldn't they take their fancy! Then the work—why, I tell you, Bessy Conway! it would be many times easier to do it one's self than be everlastingly hunting after *them*. It's real hard to put up with them—that it is—for they won't take the trouble to do things slick, and when a mistress finds fault with them for not doing as they had ought to, they'll give sa'ce to no end, and finish with 'I can't do it any better, Mrs. So and So! if you don't like it, get another!' instead of saying that they'd try and do better for the time to come."

"But, my goodness! Becky! sure Mary can't be as bad as all that comes to! Why, at home she was a fine smart clean girl as you'd see anywhere. She'd work as much as two."

"That may be, Bessy! but, you see, the work was as different as could be. I was raised in the country myself, away out in Connecticut, and I ought to know what country work is. Milking cows, and cleaning dairy-vessels, and feeding poultry and such things an't the least bit like sweeping carpets, and dusting furniture, and washing paintings, and ever so many other little matters that belong to a housemaid's work in the city. I *wish* I could get Mary to do things just so! I'm sure I've tried all I could. There wan't any one but me to see to her——"

"Why, where was the mistress?" Bessy asked in surprise.

Becky seldom laughed but she laughed then—a low, dry laugh peculiar to herself: "Why, out about the city, to be sure. Mrs. Graham has got the business of so many friends to look after that she hasn't a moment's time to look after her own."

"Goodness gracious! how can that be?"

"Well! you know she hasn't any family of her own, and she gits a girl in to do her sewing, so she has no way of passing the time at home, and she says it's so lonesome all day long when Mr. Graham is at business that she can't bear it, poor dear lady!—"

"Well?"

"Well! as soon as ever she gets her breakfast down in the morning and Mr. Graham off to his store, out she goes herself and a sight of her we never see till coming on evening again."

"Mercy on me, Becky! what does she be doing?"

"As if I could tell how a lady spends her time when she's out! I guess she's shopping part of the day and paying visits and finding out what's going on the rest of the time. The only thing I know about it is that she has always a budget of news at dinner for Mr. Graham about all the folks they know, so that looks as if she took pains to hunt it up. But she's real good to me—I wouldn't wish a kinder mistress. I may just do as I like all the week round."

"Do you know what, Becky?" said Bessy shrewdly, "I think if Mrs. Graham had other girls to deal with she wouldn't spend so much of her time out."

"That may be, too," said Becky, with much self-complacency; "I will say for myself that there an't anything neglected or anything wasted in my part of the work no more than if she was in. But, la me! Bessy, it an't anything strange in New York for ladies to spend their day out."

"No!"

"No, indeed!—why, child, I have lived in families—some of them only in middling circumstances, too—where there was three, or four, or five children to look after, and it was just the same. Let the money come how it might they had a sewing-girl most of the time, and dressed and went out every day as sure as the afternoon came, and, goodness gracious! if you saw them on the sunny side of Broadway they'd dazzle your

eyes so with jewelry and satins, and laces and all such things, that you scarce could bear to look at them."

"Lord bless my soul! are you in earnest?" ejaculated Bessy.

"I guess I am," said Becky, with her strange laugh. "But that an't the worst of it. I have known that same sewing-girl I spoke of to come, perhaps a dozen times, after her money, before she could git it, though the lady knew very well she had a poor sickly mother depending on what she earned. As for the house-girls—she had three of us, the lady I'm speaking of now—we used to have to take our wages in quarters and half dollars, and glad to get it at that, sometimes after we had left and gone to other places. I tell you, Bessy, one sees the world when she's living out—between ladies and their help I've seen enough of it. Well! what's going on now?" addressing Mary, who had just come into the kitchen, and having carefully shut the door, threw herself into a chair, laughing immoderately.

"You that's so good at guessing, Becky, guess what I was at ever since?" she said, as soon as she could find voice to speak.

After sundry ineffectual attempts, Becky guessed she must give it up. "What *were* you doing?"

"Well! I was helping Mrs. Graham to teach Flora to beg. *She* was sittin' in the rockin'-chair givin' out the word of command, and I was holdin' up the dog's paws every time to get her into the way of it. Mr. Graham laughed at the two of us till you might tie him with a straw, and *I* had hard work, you may be sure, to keep in till I got out of the room. I declare my sides are sore with the laughing, so they are! A full hour by the clock teaching Flora to stand on her hind legs!—oh! oh! oh!—and the mistress hadn't time to darn a fine collar of hers that was torn in the wash—she had to put it away till Miss Johnston comes next week!—and I heard Mr. Graham scolding like fifty because there wasn't a button on his shirt! Oh Lord! oh Lord!"

Becky thought it her duty to rebuke Mary for laughing so at her mistress, but Mary only laughed the more: "Is it any wonder I'd laugh?" she said wiping the tears from her eyes; "grave as you are, Becky! you'd laugh yourself if you saw all the trouble that poor woman was in because Flora was so hard to put manners into. Lord knows you'd think it was life or death with her, and that's what made the master laugh himself."

Bessy was much amused by Mary's ludicrous account of the important business which had kept her so long up stairs, but she did not think it becoming to indulge her mirth where she was, or in the presence of Mrs. Graham's old servant. Her time was up, moreover, so she hurried away after inviting Becky to go and see her in Monroe street. "I know you and Mary can't come together," said she, "but you can come one at a time, you know." Becky promised to go very soon. She had taken a great fancy to Bessy, and often told Mary afterwards that if she would only keep more of *her* company and take more of her advice *she* would soon be a different girl to what *she* was.

That same evening, an hour or two later, Henry Herbert was sitting alone in his room—a front bed-room in a large boarding-house somewhere in Eldridge or Forsythe street—it matters not now which. He sat at a table in the centre of the room with his head bowed down on his chest, and his legs stretched at full length under the table, whilst one hand played idly with the gold watch-chain that hung in rich contrast over his brown velvet vest, and the other rested on an open letter which lay before him. There was a frown on his usually open brow, and a sneer on his lip that extended itself over his whole face, giving a sort of sardonic character to features that nature had made fair to look upon.

"So it is," said he half aloud, taking up the letter again, "my mother is almost as griping as my father. Money and position are the idols of both. Let us see again what *she* says:

"'My dear son,'—ay! very dear, indeed,—'I have just received your letter which I have not dared to show to your father. He has *not* forgiven you, Henry! and what is worse, I fear he never will'—I'm pretty sure of it, mother! if *you* never said it—'And, after all, you cannot blame him'—oh! of course not!—'you betrayed his confidence'—I never *had* it to betray—'you robbed him of his honest gains'—the sneer came again on Herbert's face bitterer than ever, as he muttered:—"honest, indeed!—I think the less we say about that the better. 'Two hundred pounds in these times is no trifle.' It is to your husband, madam! 'And it was not worth your while to turn your father's heart against you for such a paltry sum—you know it would all have been yours some day,—there was no one for it but yourself,—humph! that's *live horse and you'll get grass*,—I'd rather have a little as I went along, and less in the long run. 'But oh! Henry! Henry! there's worse than all that said of you here'—there is, eh?—'can it be true that you took Denis Conway's daughter off with you?—some say you married her, but oh! surely, surely, you would not disgrace your family by such a step!' Ha! ha! ha! that is so like her—disobedience, robbery, and all the other sins possible and impossible laid to my charge are honorable and meritorious acts when compared with a plebeian marriage!—that alone would entail *disgrace*, it seems!—and then"—the frown on his brow grew darker still—"and then, no thought of the possible injury done to Bessy in case I *had* taken her with me—but not as a wife—no thought of the shame and misery that would, then, indeed, fall on a virtuous family respected by all in their own sphere—no thought of the ruin such a connection would bring to *her*—the black sin to both—oh! mother! mother! what wonder is it that I am what I am!"

There was little more in the letter except an urgent request for Henry to let the writer know if it was true about that unfortunate marriage—if not, all might yet be well. As the young man glanced at the neat, fair signature written in a



large Italian hand, he smiled darkly to himself and muttered "It should have been *Jezabel* instead of *Isabel*." With the impression of this evil thought legibly written on his face, he pushed back his chair with a violent gesture and commenced walking the room with rapid strides, muttering to himself in a gloomy sullen tone:

"Two hundred pounds, indeed! if I had only that it wouldn't last me long here! Sharp as they are, I outwitted them both—and why not? had I not a right to a share of 'my father's substance?' My father's substance, forsooth! Captain Walters and others, too, will tell you that the bulk of that same substance is *theirs*—why should I scruple taking from my father that which he has embezzled from the rightful owners? How soft my dear mother takes me to be when she speaks of my father's 'honest gains!'—truth to tell I were no child of theirs were I so easily duped as that—surely she ought to know her 'dear son' better than suppose him such a novice in this world's wiles! It is strange, however, that my father has not found it all out before now! What will he do when he *does* come to know it? I don't think he can do anything to trouble me here, and if not he may go whistle jigs to a milestone or

'Ride a cock-horse to Banbury-cross  
To see Master Harry upon a white horse.'

Ha! ha! ha! 'They may seek me *but* they shall not find me,' as our old parson used to sing out. I think I see my venerable parent riding off in the deuce of a hurry in search of his truant son and his missing money-bags! Wouldn't he cut a figure! And my gentle mother looking after him at the door through her gold spectacles!"

The idea thus presented to his mind so tickled his risible faculties that he threw himself into a chair laughing immoderately. That being over, his mood underwent another change, and a softened expression stole over his features. "There is but one being in the world whom I love," he murmured softly,

"but one who has power over my heart. Some secret bond of sympathy exists between us and I know I could win Bessy—yes, I know and feel it—but here again my wayward fate—or my evil genius—flings its dark shadow between us two. I could set the world at defiance and marry her within an hour, for there is a treasure in her heart and in her mind which I could turn to account, but she will not hear me—she will not trust me—the curse of that dark hour of guilt is upon me, and will be to the day I die! I have heard of the curse of Cain following men the wide world through—well! that brand, anyhow, is not on *my* brow—the thing that seems so foul to others was but a boyish frolic—it harmed no man nor woman either—why does the Avenging Arm, then, still pursue me? Why are those awful words stamped on my soul in letters of flame burning, burning ever? Oh God! who can stand against Thy justice?"

A knock came to the door just then, and Herbert putting the letter hastily out of sight, opened the door and Dixon walked in with that bold, swaggering air which was natural to him. There was a smile on his face, too, but it threw no light over the dark features. He was, or at least appeared to be, in high spirits.

"Give me joy, Herbert! I've got first-rate news for you," he said, "I'm the luckiest fellow in New York to-night."

"As how?" Herbert asked rather stiffly; he felt annoyed at the fellow's intrusion, but did not care to say so.

"As how? why, as the winner of three hundred dollars."

"That *was* a good plucking. Who was the fowl?"

"Oh! a goose of a Southerner—a Georgian from Savannah."

"Did you pocket the cash?" said Herbert, in a half incredulous tone.

"I guess I did, in New York paper—A number ONE!"

"Have you got it about you?"

"I rather think I have." And after some moment's search in his pocket-book, he drew out three hundred-dollar bills,

which he handed to Herbert, and then sat watching the young man's countenance while he read it, with the most sinister expression possible.

When Herbert looked up from the paper Dixon was smiling again. "Well! are you satisfied?"

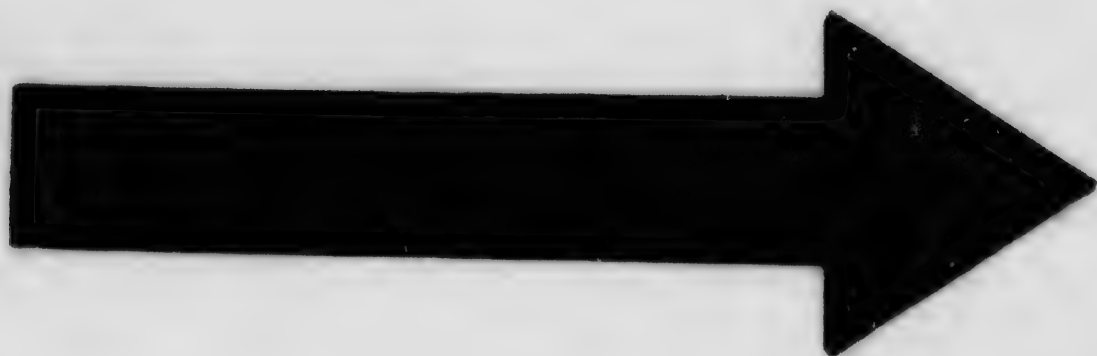
"Of course I am."

"All right—you see I am not *always* unlucky as you seemed to suppose—the jade Fortune begins to smile on me, as she will on you by and by—courage and perseverance, you know, are sure to conquer."

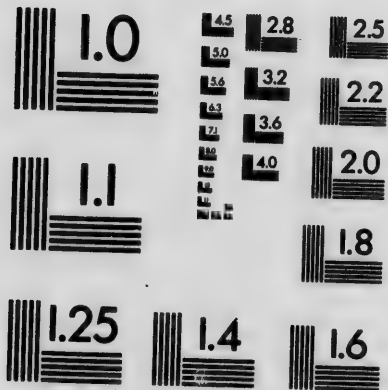
"I tell you again I don't *want* to conquer. I have money enough to serve my turn."

But Dixon would not take that for an answer. He knew better what was passing in Herbert's mind than Herbert did himself. He saw that something had ruffled his nature to its very depths, and by a little dexterous management he succeeded in drawing the secret out of him. That gained the rest was easy, and in half an hour's skilful operation on Herbert's weak points he had worked him up to a state of excitement that swept away every vestige of prudence, every good resolution that had been gathering strength in his mind during the trying months of their ill-starred acquaintance. Striking the iron whilst it was hot, he gave Herbert no time to cool, but hurried him off to join a party of "right gay fellows" who were waiting supper for them at a well-known gaming-house in the vicinity.

That moment was the turning-point in Henry Herbert's career, and his good angel left him as he crossed the threshold of that man-trap. When he crossed it again with pallid cheek and bloodshot eye the morning sun was shining far up in the firmament. The city was all astir and the busy children of trade and toil were hurrying hither and thither intent on the duties of their various callings. Not so with Henry Herbert. The deadly languor which follows excess paralyzed his whole being, body—soul—all. Yet the fire of passion was burning



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in every vein and throbbing in every pulse. The lash of conscience was lacerating his soul—he hated his companions, for all night long they had been robbing him of his ill-got treasures—"plucking him," as he had said of the Georgian who was but the creature of Dixon's imagination—the decoy-duck, as it were, to draw Herbert into the snare. Yes! Herbert hated them all, for they had taunted and goaded him into the jaws of ruin, but he hated himself most of all for allowing himself to become their dupe.

"Buy a *Herald*, sir!—*Daily Herald*, sir!" The voice was that of Mike Milligan, and as Herbert glanced down at the boy's rather peculiar face, he recognized him at once as the same who had brought him Paul's message that night at the Shakspeare. Somehow he winced at the sight of him, and vexed at being seen emerging from such a place at such a time he said what under other circumstances he would not have said—what he never said before:

"Go to h—— with your *Herald*!"

"Thank you kindly, Mr. Herbert!" the urchin replied, "maybe you want company on the way—I'd be willing to oblige you, sir, but I don't know as they want papers there!"

The boy turned a corner and was out of sight before Herbert had made up his mind whether to inflict corporal punishment on him or not.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE early Spring of the Middle States was already far advanced and the rich holmes of Manhattan Island were covered with freshest verdure when Paul Brannigan, going up to see how his friend Ned Finigan got on, was asked by him to take a ride with him in the stage out to one of the avenues where he was going on business. It was seldom Paul had an opportunity of escaping beyond the city limits out into the green fields whose freshness was as grateful to his eyes as the oasis of the desert to the sand-parched, sun-scorched traveller. So he joyfully accepted Ned's offer, and when they got out of the stage to walk by a near cut across the meadows to where they were going, the little man could hardly keep from singing a merry old-world lay that was on his lips, so full was his heart of joy and peace as he trotted along by the side of his tall companion. He was surprised that Ned did not seem to feel as he did himself the exhilarating influence of the balmy air, and the sweet-smelling herbage, and the rapid flow of the East River as its waters sparkled in the pale light of the crescent moon. But Ned was unusually silent and, as it were, pre-occupied, and after several attempts to make him participate in his own light-hearted gaiety, he desisted and continued his march for awhile in silence. All at once, however, he broke out into a gush of melody, and the song which had been in his heart escaped over his lips—a song of home—of mingled joy and sorrow:

" My bark o'er the billow dash'd gloriously on,  
And glad were the notes of the sailor-boy's song,  
Yet sad was my bosom, and bursting with woe,  
For my heart's in Old Ireland wherever I go.

" More dear than the roses all Italy yields,  
Are the red-breasted daisies that spangled the fields,  
The shamrock, the hawthorn, the white-blossom'd sloe,  
Oh! my heart's in Old Ireland wherever I go.

" Tho' lilies and roses no more deck the plains,  
And the summer is gone, still the shamrock remains,—  
Like a friend in misfortune, it blooms o'er the snow,  
Oh! my heart's in Old Ireland wherever I go.

" Then I sigh and I vow that if e'er I get home,  
No more from my dear little cottage I'll roam,  
The harp shall resound and the goblet shall flow,  
For my heart's in Old Ireland wherever I go." \*

" That's you, Paul!" said Ned in a more cheerful tone, as the last line, repeated again, died away on Paul's lips; "bedad! it's yourself can do it! By the laws! I didn't hear a song since I left home that did my heart so much good as that! Well! now, I'd give a good deal to have a voice like yours, for I'm sure you need never feel sad or sorry while you can raise such a lilt as that—it'll carry your heart back over the salt sea the heaviest time it is!"

"Pooh! pooh! man," said Paul carelessly, "I'd rather hear the voice of the cuckoo than all the songs I could sing in a year."

"I'd rather hear yourself than fifty cuckoos," said one from a group of laborers who were shouldering their spades and shovels to "wend their homeward way" after their day of hard toil "at the rich man's gate,"—"Not but what I have a respect for the poor bird on account of old times and where I used to

\* The above verses, so sweet in their simplicity, so full of exquisite pathos, are said to have been written by a young Presbyterian minister from the North of Ireland who was drowned in the Schuylkill at Philadelphia. The story goes that they were found in the pocket of this unfortunate gentleman.



hear her, a place that maybe I'll never see again—still I'd sooner hear *you* any day than *her*, for she has only the one note and the one word, but you have words and notes that makes a body ready to laugh and ready to cry—may you never die or nobody go to kill you!"

"I'm obliged to you for your good wish," said Paul with his quaint gravity, "but I'd rather lie down quietly in my grave when my time comes than be travelin' the world keepin' company to the wanderin' Jew." At this palpable hit the men all laughed.

"More power to your lordship!" Another cried, "It's you that hasn't to look over your shoulder for an answer!"

"Is the master at home?" asked Ned of one of the laborers.

"Well! then, I b'lieve he is—he passed up here a little while ago in the coach himself an' the mistress—a fine *flahoola* pair they are—long life to them—it's themselves can fill the coach, anyhow."

"It's a fine thing to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth," observed Ned significantly.

"You may say that," replied two or three of the men simultaneously.

"It's few coaches their grannies had, I'm thinkin'," subjoined one.

"Or their mammies either," suggested another.

"Well! well! no matter for that," said the one who first accosted Paul: "There's worse than him or her ridin' in coaches these times—if they haven't the larnin' or the fine speech like the rale quality, they made their money honestly—what they have is their own, an' that's what can't be said of many a one that carries as high a head as they do."

Leaving these homely moralizers to pursue the subject at their leisure in beguilement of their homeward march, we must follow our oddly matched comrades up to the door of the palatial mansion where 'the master' dwelt in what he

intended for aristocratic splendor. The building was of brown stone with windows opening almost to the floor on every story, and portals large and lofty leading to its spacious hall. Along the front ran a broad piazza whose roof was supported by light and graceful pillars of Egyptian marble, around which the rarest flowers of Spring were twining their fairy tendrils, in preparation for the gorgeous show of Summer. A sloping lawn lay in front of the house, its hue of emerald velvet indicating the care bestowed upon it. The view through the half-closed curtains of crimson and yellow damask was like a glimpse into some of those palaces of Eastern story, our childhood's wonder and delight, and Ned Finigan said to his friend as he timidly placed his hand on the bell:

"Well! do you know, Paul, myself's afraid to venture in. Still, I suppose I must, as we came so far."

He rang with a tremulous hand, and the door was opened by a colored servant in livery. He looked savage, Ned thought, and he did, too, for he had opened the door with his best bow ready in expectation of some distinguished, or, at least, well-dressed visitor. Seeing Ned and the dwarf he asked gruffly what they wanted, and seemed well inclined to shut the door in their faces.

"A good evenin' to you!" said Ned in a deprecating tone; "would you be pleased to tell me is Mister McRory in the house?"

"Can't say," said the nigger grandly; "what you want him for?"

"Well! I just came up to see him about a little business of my own."

"Mr. McRory neber sees nobody on business here. Go to his office to-morrow."

"But couldn't I speak a word with him? If you'd be so kind as to tell him that it's Ned Finigan that wants to see him, I'm sure he wouldn't refuse after me and this other decent man comin' so far."

"Tell you it an't no use"—and the nigger made to shut the door—"Missis sees company to-night."

"God spare her her eyesight," Ned broke in rather abruptly. "Doesn't she see them *every* night?"

The consequential man of office not perceiving the droll expression of Ned's face, took the trouble to answer with much condescension:

"No, she don't receive every night—that an't the fashion—she receives every Tuesday."

"God reward her!" ejaculated Ned, taking the word in its usual acceptation amongst *his* class. "She must be a very pious lady to receive every Tuesday—it's a wonder it isn't Sunday—"

There's no saying what the nigger might have done or said with regard to this last blunder of Ned's, but just at the moment the lord of the mansion made his appearance at the further end of the room, and Ned called out to him:

"Mr. McRory, sir! I wanted to speak a word with you, if it was pleasin'."

"Who is that, Sambo?" said Mr. McRory to his man.

"It's me, sir!" said Ned advancing down the long hall, hat in hand.

"Who are *you*?"

"Ned Finigan, sir."

"What the deuce brings you here, Ned Finigan?"

Ned began in an apologetic tone: "I made so bold as to come up to see you, sir, in regard to a little business that's troublin' me."

"Do you know, Mister Ned Finigan, that I have an office in town, where you may find me every day from nine to four?"

I know you have, sir, and I was there twice the day, but you weren't in."

"Really, you're a troublesome fellow, and you come at a confoundedly wrong time—but come along in here—I suppose it's about the readiest way to get you off—now mind, I have

no time to listen to long-winded stories. Who is that other fellow? Has *he* a little business, too?"

"He's a decent man, sir, a friend of mine, that came with me for company."

"Let him sit in the hall, Sambo!" said Sambo's master, at the same time giving Sambo a wink suggestive of caution. Paul anticipated Sambo's reluctant invitation, by saying he'd rather wait outside. He supposed Ned wouldn't be long.

Mr. McRory led the way into a room opening on the hall at the side opposite the parlors. It was splendidly fitted up with shelves and mahogany book-cases, and as many books, Ned used to say, as would keep all New York reading for a twelve-month. There were fine pictures in gilt frames, too, the like of which Ned had never seen, and blue damask curtains hanging to the ground. It was well for Ned that he was no connoisseur of paintings, for he admired those he saw around him to such a degree that they fairly dazzled his eyes, and so he told Mr. McRory who was as much flattered by the compliment as if Ned Finigan had come from the classic Vale of Arno instead of the golden Valley of the Suir. Whether the hope of such a result had been at the bottom of Ned's critical observation, is beyond our power to tell, but certain it is that Mr. McRory was a different man altogether after this timely manifestation of Ned's taste for the fine arts.

"Well! what's wrong with you, Ned?" said the great man smilingly. "How goes it with the Castle these times?"

"Famously, Mr. McRory! famously, sir! and the sorra thing ails myself, either, glory be to God, only in regard to Peery Murphy—that's Ally's father—he's out o' work at the present time, an' I heard you were on the look-out for a settled sober man to drive some of the horses—now that's what Peery's best at, for he was a carman to home—you know what that is, sir?"

"I guess I do," said McRory with a good-natured smile; "but about your father-in-law—now couldn't you have waited till I'd be in town to-morrow? eh, Ned?"

"Why, then, I could, Mr. McRory, only I was told there were others lookin' after the situation, and I didn't know but I'd be too late if I waited till the morrow."

"Well, that's true enough, but take yourself off now like a decent man, for I heard some company coming in, and Mrs. McRory won't be well pleased for me to be out of the room—I'll see about Peery's business to-morrow. You may come to my office with him about twelve o'clock."

"Long life to you, Mister McRory!—may your shadow never be less!"

Thereupon the great man repaired to the parlor, where his worthy spouse sat in state glittering with jewelry and the richest brocade that money could buy in New York, her comely face as fresh, and fair, and rosy, as though twenty-five instead of forty-five was the number of her years. She had already "received" some half a dozen ladies and gents—more or less, and the sound of carriage wheels announced the arrival of others.

When Ned went out and looked round in search of Paul, no Paul was there. Shrewdly surmising that the hunchback had taken his unseemly bulk out of the way and from under the eyes of "the quality," Ned hurried down the short avenue, and there, indeed, he found the little man sitting on the low stone base of the iron railing which divided Mr. McRory's lawn from the high road. He looked as contented as possible, amusing himself with the gambols of a little red squirrel in the branches of a neighboring linden.

"I suppose you thought I'd never come," said Ned wiping the perspiration from his brow, for he had walked at the top of his speed down the avenue.

"Deed I didn't, then," said Paul, "I knew you'd find your way out of there in no time at all—it isn't the likes of you or me they want in it. That's what made me come down here to wait, an' I'm glad I did, for it's myself had the fine time of it watchin' the antics of that fellow there. I declare my heart's broke laughin' at him!"

"Bad manners to you for a sprissaun," said Ned pleasantly, "will you get up out o' that, and let us be movin' home? It's easy seen you haven't much to trouble you, or it isn't there you'd be squattin' so contentedly."

"Deed I could sit till mornin' in it, an' never find the time long either. Still I think it's as well to be on the move. Ah! you villain!" This last to the waggish little animal whose sports had beguiled his time so happily.

As the two trudged along to meet the stage, Ned, being in a better humor for talking, rattled away with his accustomed fluency on a great variety of subjects. All of a sudden Paul turned up the side of his head to him and said with keen emphasis:

"How is Mister Herbert gettin' on these times?"

"How the mischief do *I* know?" returned Ned sharply.

"What have *I* to do with Mister Herbert?"

"Why, I'm told he's a daily visitor at the *Castle*, and brings a power of custom there, too. Maybe it isn't true, though."

"Well! it is, and it isn't," said Ned with some embarrassment; "he does come in of an odd time, but he's not a daily visitor."

"An' I'm told that you and him are as great as two pick-pockets."

"It's a lie for anybody that says it," cried Ned vehemently.

"Oh! maybe it is," said Paul in an ironical tone, "an' maybe it's a lie, too, that he does be treatin' the landlord to the best in the house oftener than it's good for his health. Dear me! isn't it a wicked world when decent people can't turn in their skins without somebody makin' a talk of it!"

"Come now, Paul! none of your jibin'! It would blister your tongue to speak a good word of any one, so it would."

"Many a good word I said of *you*, then," Paul replied, "an' it didn't blister my tongue. An' there's Bessy Conway, to go no farther—I'd like to see the man or woman that ever heard

me say an ill word of *her*, for the reason that she never left it in my power."

"It's well she didn't," said Ned rather sarcastically.

"Ay! is it! but if *you* that's her own blood relation had only half the respect for her that I have—that's not a drop's blood to her—you'd keep that rap of a fellow at arm's length. Do you hear anything, Ned?"

"Don't be botherin' me, I tell you! Mister Herbert has done more to help me along since I set up the Castle than anybody else—barrin' Mister McRory. You done your best to blacken him, Paul! but, by the powers! you've played that game out—you're long enough throwin' dust in my eyes!"

"Wisha, God help you, poor foolish fellow!" said Paul in a tone of commiseration, "it isn't me that's throwin' dust in your eyes, though it is a throwin' in them in handfulls."

"God bless you, Paul! and hold your tongue!" cried Ned half in anger, half in sport; "I think I can see as well as you, anyhow."

"I tell you you can't, Ned Finigan!" said Paul with thrilling emphasis, and stopping short to look up in Ned's face, "if you weren't as blind as a bat and as dull as a beetle you wouldn't let it into your mind that Henry Herbert forgets the day you made a show of him before all that was on board the *Garrick*."

"Husht! here's the stage comin', but even if it wasn't, I wouldn't hear another word about that matter. I tell you once for all, he's a rale gentleman, that!"

"To be sure he is, and so is the big black-avised fellow that has his claw on him—they're both rale gentlemen, I know myself, but between you and them be it, Ned! they're the lads that have their eyes wide open if yours are shut. I wish you joy of your *friends*, Ned! but for me, I'll wash my hands of you!"

The stage rattled up and the two took their places at opposite ends of the carriage. No words, therefore, past between

them, and they even avoided each other's eyes, so strong was the feeling elicited on either side by the recent passage at arms. They had got as far as Eighth street on their way down the Third avenue, when the stage stopped to take in a passenger, whom our friends at once recognized as Father Daly. Ned sat next the door, and in answer to his respectful greeting, the priest said in a low voice:

"I'm glad to meet you here, Ned! I am just on my way to your house."

"To my house, your reverence!" Ned repeated in surprise; "why, then, it's yourself will be welcome as the flowers in May, but I'm sure it's an honor we didn't expect, Ally or me."

There was a tremor in his voice that showed a misgiving of some kind, but there were too many eyes on him there to permit questions, especially of a priest, so he was forced to restrain his curiosity till he reached home.

At Prince street, where Ned and Father Daly got out, Paul got out, too, as he wanted to speak to the priest about something of importance, and was thankful for the opportunity thus afforded him. This explanation was meant particularly for Ned's ear, by way of excuse for "troubling his house," after what had passed between them.

Ally was all in a flutter at the sight of Father Daly. Dropping her lowest curtsy, she whispered to Ned to take his reverence up stairs, and she'd be up in a minute. Paul could not be prevailed upon to go up until after the priest had made the object of his visit known to those whom it concerned, so he took his seat on the bench in the corner.

And what was Father Daly's business there that evening? Ned did not venture to put the question, but he looked it, and the priest with a kindly smile hastened to satisfy his curiosity.

"Are you aware that your sister-in-law is going to be married?"

Ned jumped from his seat. "*My* sister-in-law, your reverence? Mary Murphy, is it?"



"Your sister-in-law, Mary Murphy!"

Without more ado Ned pulled the door open, and running to the stair-head called out "Ally! Ally! come here, Ally!"

"Lord bless us, what's the matter?" cried Ally from below; "is the house a-fire?"

"House a-fire! no, it isn't, but Mary's goin' to be married!" Ned answered from above.

In a moment both husband and wife were in the room, breathless with excitement. "Why, Father Daly dear! sure it can't be true!" ejaculated Ally as she dropped into a chair panting and gasping. "Why, we never heard a word of it—not even my father or mother—for if they had, their first race would be to let us know. Oh! it *can't* be true, your reverence!"

"I fear it is," said the priest with a shake of the head that denoted little satisfaction.

"But who is it *to*, your reverence?"

"Oh! a young fellow that nominally belongs to our parish—that is he *lives* in it—his name is Luke Mulligan—do you know any such person?"

"Luke Mulligan!" said one, "Luke Mulligan!" echoed the other, and then they looked into each other's eyes, and their faces grew very red.

"Why, then, Ned!" said Ally much disturbed, "could it be the same Luke Mulligan that used to go round gatherin' rags at home?"

"God knows but it is, Ally! You know we heard that he came out to America after that scrape that he got into about Cashel somewhere——"

"Oh Lord! oh Lord!" groaned Ally, "what's this for, at all? Ah then, what's the scamp doin' here, your reverence?"

"That's what I cannot tell you, Mrs. Finigan!" the priest said very gravely. "I have not been able to learn *what* he does for a living, or whether he does *anything*—all I know is that he dresses very showily—sports rings, and scarf-pins, and

what not, and is altogether what they call here 'a swell.' A fine looking fellow he is, too!"

"But, my goodness, Father Daly! where did the good-for-nothing creature fall in with him?"

"That is more than I can tell you, Mrs. Finigan!" said Father Daly rising; "the young couple came to me yesterday evening to be married. I, of course, asked your sister if she had the consent of her parents, and, after some hesitation, she answered in the affirmative. I then asked why they were not with her, or why it wasn't to *their* parish priest she applied. Mary could give no satisfactory reason, and the fellow began to bluster and give impudence, saying that the young woman was over twenty-one—could do as she liked, and so on. Of course I refused to marry them until I had ascertained whether the girl's parents were cognizant of the matter, or how far the necessary conditions had been, or were likely to be, complied with. You are now to acquaint your father and mother of Mary's intentions, and let them take what steps they may think proper—my advice to you and them is, to prevent the marriage if possible. Unless I am much mistaken it would entail misery and perhaps ruin on your sister."

Paul just then knocked at the door, and as Ned passed him on the lobby, he whispered: "There's a lot of people waitin' below, and Henry Herbert among the rest. I'll see you all down there before I go."

The dwarf's business with Father Daly was soon dispatched. He merely slipped a two dollar bill into his hand to say Masses for poor Philip Sheehan. "Dolly and me were going up to you to-morrow or next day, so this will save us the journey. The old woman has a notion that she'd rather have your reverence say the Masses than anybody else."

Father Daly took a note of the affair in his memorandum, and sent word to Mrs. Sheehan that he was going to see her very soon. Reminding Ally of the necessity of seeing her parents at once about Mary, he hurried away.

## CHAPTER XIV.

FATHER DALY was no sooner gone that evening than Ally went off post-haste to acquaint her father and mother of the news he had brought concerning Mary. Just as she had expected they were grieved beyond measure. They had never suspected Mary of carrying on such under-hand doings, and even the knowledge that she was, was bad enough in itself, but when they heard who the *beau* was they were struck speechless with anger and astonishment. At first nothing would serve Bridget but she must don her blue cloak and herself and Peery go straight up to Houston street. After some persuasion, however, she was so far pacified as to agree to let one of the boys go up for Mary, Ally to wait there till she came.

"Oh! the faggot!—the faggot!" cried Bridget clapping her hands in a sudden burst of grief and indignation, "was it to take up with a scape-grace like Luke Mulligan that she came to America! A fellow she wouldn't look at at home! To disgrace all belongin' to her! Oh wirra! *wirra!* what's comin' over us, at all?" and she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

Ally and her father tried to calm this wild excitement but for some time they could not succeed.

"Don't you know, mother, we all feel as bad as you do?" said Ally, "but it's time enough to grieve when the harm is done. It's not too late yet to prevent it—at least I'd fain hope so."

"Now, Ally dear! what's the use of talkin' to me that way?" said the mother looking up through her tears; "you know well enough that whatever that foolish creature takes in her head she'll see it out, come what may? And God knows it's as much on *your* account an' the dacent man that's married to you as anything else that I'm troubled!"

"Take it easy, Bridget!" was Peery's characteristic exhortation; "if you fret yourself black in the face it'll not make matters any better, an' be sure, now, if Mary comes you'll not fly in a passion with her—if you do you'll ruin us all."

But Bridget's patience was not put to *that* test. Her son returned breathless after half an hour's absence with the news that Mary was not in and that Becky was afraid she was gone off to be married.

This set the whole family in a commotion. The mother was inconsolable and sat rocking herself on her low bench in the corner with her apron to her eyes, sobbing and crying as if her heart would break. "Oh sure I knew it! sure I knew it well, for the heavy load came over my heart the minute I heard Luke Mulligan's name mentioned. Och! och! if it was under board she was before me there the night, it wouldn't crush me half so sore! Oh Mary! Mary! it's too proud I was out of you, *ma colleen dhas!* an' it's you that's bringin' shame an' sorrow on us all!"

"Sure enough I often tould you," said Peery, "that the foolery she was gettin' on with since she came here wouldn't turn out well. Didn't I now, Bridget? I vow to God it made me ashamed many a time to see the airs she put on her—an' them dances she'd be goin' to. Bridget! my poor woman! my heart's bleedin' for you, so it is!—but you know well how you used to laugh at me, yourself and Mary, when I'd be tryin' to put sense in the colleen's head."

"But, Lord bless me, Tommy!" said Ally to her brother, "what did Becky say? Did you ask her any questions?"

"I did, then," said the lad gloomily—he and his brother

felt the disgrace of an alliance with Luke Mulligan, perhaps even more sensibly than any of the others; "I asked her if she knew how Mary got in with Luky, and she told me 'yes,' that it was at one of the Saturday-night dances she met him, and that she only seen him five or six times, off an' on, till they made a match of it. She says the reason they kept it secret from us all was because Mary knew well enough you'd never give your consent."

The question, then, was "what's to be done?" and at Ally's suggestion her father and Tommy went up with her to get Ned to go with them in search of Mary. "He can't go," said Ally, "unless I'm there to mind the bar, so I must leave you with Peter, mother dear! hopin' that they'll soon be able to bring us back better news than we have now."

The search was, for some time, unsuccessful—indeed some hours were spent going from one priest's house to another without finding any trace of the fugitives. They had applied at St. Patrick's and were refused marriage by the pastor there, for the same reason that had actuated Father Daly at St. Joseph's. He said he feared the couple were married somewhere before that time, as he had heard the intended groom say on leaving his door: "If the next doesn't marry us we'll go to a minister—that's all."

But the next they went to *did* marry them, fearing worse and more scandalous consequences. The wedding party, four in number, was just coming out after having the knot tied, when the others met them at the door.

The scene that followed baffles description. The half-bashful, half-confident air with which Mary answered her father's agitated question: "Are you married?" The swaggering assurance of Luky Mulligan accosting Ned: "How are you, Ned?—you see we stole a march on you, Mary and me." Whereto Ned responded by knocking the fellow down. Mary and her bridesmaid screamed and "the best man" made a show of flight, asking with the air of a genuine bully:

"What the d——I do you do that for?"

"Ask my foot!" was Ned's polite answer as he shook his fist at the fellow to keep out of his reach. By this time Luky had gathered himself up with Mary's assistance, and shying off from Ned, he attempted to shake hands with his father-in-law, but Peery, inert and sluggish as was his nature, had the Tipperary blood in his veins, and he dashed away the proffered hand with the contempt due to "a rascal of a ragman," as he styled Luky.

"Don't speak to me, Luky Mulligan!" said the angry parent; "howsomever you got yor *comether* put on this fool of a girl here, you'll never be any the nearer to us,—an' it's the best of your play to keep away from us."

"Father dear!" said Mary, "don't be so hard on poor Luke—you don't know him."

"I know him far too well, Mary! an' I don't know what came over *you*—or what low dhrop broke out in you when you had anything to say to Luky Mulligan the ragman!"

Mary bristled up at this and said Luke was just as good as she was, which made her father still more exasperated, and after sundry other passages equally polite and complimentary, Peery told his daughter never to darken his door, for if he met her on the street he wouldn't speak to her. Mary was too much offended to attempt conciliating her father, and Luky, taking her arm within his, said, "Come along, Mary! you needn't care a rap for any of them now—I'll do for you better than *they* would, for all their talk!"

"Deed you will, Luky!" said Ned looking back over his shoulder; "I know the way *you*'ll do for her—the way you always do for yourself. Get along, the pair of you—you're well met—if you weren't you wouldn't come together!"

"Don't holla till you're out of the wood, Ned Finigan!" said Luky turning his head in turn; "there's them above ground that'll *do for you*, any way! Put that in your pipe an' smoke it."

"What's that he says?" asked Peery of Ned.

"I hardly know myself," said Ned, no little puzzled by what he heard; "I believe it's threatenin' me the *omadhaun* is—if that's it, he may talk till he's black in the face!—ho! ho! ho!"

So this was the news brought back to Bridget and Ally, and this was the last the Murphys saw of Mary for many a long day to come. She made her own bed, her mother said, and be it hard or soft she'd lie in it for them!

A day or two after, Paul, going home from his work in the evening, was accosted by his young friend and pupil Mike Milligan. "Look here, Mister Branigan! I've got something to tell you."

"You have, eh? and what is it, Mike, my boy? But stay! you'd best come and tell me inside. I'm just on my step goin' home."

"Well! now, Mike, let us hear the secret!" said Paul when they were seated in front of the little cooking-stove wherein a bright fire was burning under Dolly's tea-kettle, where it sat singing the merriest of tunes, in very joy for Paul's return.

"I think Mr. Herbert is up to something these days," said Mike spreading out his hands in front of the grate to catch the genial warmth; "I heard him three or four nights ago talking with a chap that he called Luke Mulligan—most a namesake of my own—about some gal that Luke wanted to marry but her people wouldn't hear of it——"

"Lord bless me!" ejaculated Paul, "that's Mary's man that is now—go on, Mike! what more passed between them?"

"It seems they're from the same place at home——"

"To be sure they are—to be sure—well, Mike?"

"So Mister Herbert told the other fellow to go right ahead and not to mind the confounded set. 'But, hang it! Master Henry!' says Mulligan, 'I haven't a rap to jingle on a tombstone. Where's the marriage-money to come from?' With that, Mister Herbert put his hand in his pocket and 'here it's for you,' says he,—'I've a score to settle with some belong-

ing to her, and I think it will pay a trifle of it off to help *you* to make Mistress Mulligan of Mary Murphy—ha! ha! ha! eh, Luky?' 'Well now, Master Henry!' says the other back to him, "you needn't be makin' so little o' a fellow as all that comes to—there's them that carries a high head that isn't any better than their neighbors, if the truth was known——'"

"Ha! an' what did he say to that—Herbert, I mane?"

"I guess he wasn't very well pleased, for he began to bite his lips till you'd think he'd bite them through, but he took out his pocket-book and gave Mulligan some bills, and told him to go and get married as fast as ever he could, and never to show his face to him again till the job was done."

When the boy ended Paul drew a long breath, and then sat silent for awhile looking into the fire, with his hands resting on his knees. At last he started from his reverie and looking round smiled at Mike in his strange way. "He's runnin' his rig, sure enough," said he, and he nodded at Mike as if Mike knew all about it. "Maybe his tether is long enough—eh, Mike?"

Mike had no opinion to offer, but he looked so wise and so cute that Paul was sure he could speak, if he wished. He nodded at Mike accordingly, and Mike nodded at him, and so the matter ended for that time, and Paul told Mrs. Sheehan to stir herself and get the tea till Mike got a cup to warm him before he went. The interval was employed by Paul in a cursory examination of Mike in the Christian Doctrine. The result was highly satisfactory, and Paul rubbed his hands and smiled gleefully, and thought how glad Nancy Leary would be if that lamented individual were still in the flesh to take cognizance of her adopted son's scholastic attainments.

"Bedad, Mike, if you go on so," said Paul, "you'll soon know as much as I do myself, an' more, too, maybe—then you'll leave off sellin' papers, Mike, and you'll go to a trade, or some business, and then you'll get on from less to more till



you'll be—oh, dear me! I don't know what I'd wish you to be!"

Mike laughed "Maybe a President, or a Judge——"

"Not so high as that," said Paul with a shake of his massive head, "but sure *my* wishin' won't make you one thing or the other. God grant you grace to live and die a good Christian, anyhow!—if you're that, there's no fear but you'll do well in every way. Sit over now, Mike, and take your tea."

The next evening Bessy was down to Ned Finigan's to ask if it was true about Mary's marriage. She had heard a flying report of it, but could hardly believe it possible, so she thought she would ask leave of Mrs. Hibbard to go out for an hour or so till she'd see how it was. She found Mrs. Murphy up stairs with Ally, the two of them crying as if some one belonging to them was lying dead before their eyes. The sight of Bessy renewed their grief, and Bessy saw at a glance that the news was only too true.

"Oh Bessy! Bessy!" cried the mother clapping her hands in a fresh burst of sorrow, "hadn't we the hard, hard fortune to come to America? Astore machree! did you hear what came on us?"

"Indeed I did," Bessy replied, "but I couldn't let it in on me at all that there was any truth in it. I declare, Mrs. Murphy, I'd as soon hear of Mary's death in a manner."

"Her death!" repeated Ally in high disdain, "her death! oh! if it was only her death that troubled us we'd soon get over that—by the time the grass was green over her, we'd be gettin' reconciled to our loss—but now—oh Bessy! *you* know as well as any of us the shame and disgrace she has brought on us all—what we'll never get over—never—never!" and throwing her black apron over her face Ally broke out again into a hysterical fit of crying and sobbing.

Bessy did her best to console the disconsolate pair but her efforts had little success. "Even time itself," the mother said, "couldn't wear *that* sorrow away. Oh dear! oh dear!

Luky Mulligan the ragman! a fellow that at home darn't look the side of the road Mary Murphy would walk—och! och! if he was honest or dacent, or had a good name, sure rags an' all, they'd try to make the best of it, but the greatest scamp in the seven parishes—an' comin' from a bad breed into the bargain—arrah Bessy Conway! what'll we do, at all?—what'll the neighbors say at home when they hear it?—God help us! what *can* they say?"

"But, my goodness, Mrs. Murphy!" said Bessy earnestly, "how in the world did Mary fall in with *him*, of all people?"

"At the dances dear!" the mother replied with angry emphasis, "at them rascally shin-digs, if it's that they call them—I'm thinkin' it's *devil*-digs they *ought* to call them, in place of *shin*-digs. Oh Bessy! achorra machree! if *my* unlucky villain had only kept away from such places, as you and every other sensible girl does, it isn't this way it would be with us now. My curse an' the curse of God be about them for dances, for it's them that has left *me* a heart-broken poor woman this blessed night!"

"If curses would put a stop to gatherings like *them*, mother," said Ally, "there wouldn't be many of them goin' on, for there's many a mother an' father, too, gets heavier sorrow and disgrace by them than you've got—and *it's* bad enough, God knows! Oh the villain of the world! couldn't she have dancin' enough here with ourselves where there was no strangers—but that wasn't *low* enough—we hadn't any Luke Mulligans here! Well! well! God look on us all, anyway!"

Bessy was just thinking what she could say by way of consoling her friends, when a tap came to the door, and in answer to Ally's "Come in!" Henry Herbert made his appearance. There was a flush on his cheek that was not natural, and a glassy look in his eyes that Bessy, at least, had never seen there before, and she shrank back in alarm she could hardly have told why.

Herbert did not notice her at first but addressed himself at once to Mrs. Finigan.

"I heard you were in great trouble, Mrs. Finigan, about your sister's marriage, so I thought I would just step up stairs to offer my sincere condolence. Perhaps—perhaps it may not turn out quite so bad after all. Luky Mulligan is not a bad sort of fellow—I knew him at home when he was no bigger than the table. He used to hang about our stable-door, helping the groom of an odd time, and picking up scraps about the kitchen that kept the life in him. Ha! ha! ha! many a good kick I administered to Luky's posterior when he made bold to turn his tongue on me. That was before he took to the rags, you know!" And again he laughed with that maudlin glee whose origin can never be mistaken.

Bridget found it hard to keep her tongue off Herbert. She could tell him things, if she chose to speak, that would pull him down a peg, for there was something in his manner that, coupled with his words, showed his intentions to be anything but friendly. She looked at Ally, as much as to say: "Will I tell him his own or not?" but Ally made a gesture enjoining silence, and after clearing her throat she spoke herself:

"We don't want any one to tell us, Mr. Herbert, what Luky Mulligan is—if Mary Murphy was mean enough to marry him, *we* didn't, an' it's only herself that has to do with him. You must think very little of Ned an' the rest of us, sir, when you'd even it to us to be on terms with *Luky Mulligan*."

Herbert laughed, or rather chuckled. "Oh! very well, Mistress Ned Finigan! I see there is no room for my interference. I thought to serve you all by effecting a general reconciliation, which, of course, would be for your own interest, seeing that honest Luky *is* in the family now, and if you snuff up your noses till you snuff them off, it won't put him out of it."

"I'd thank you, Mr. Herbert!" said Ally making another sign to her mother, whose anger she saw was about boiling over, "I'd thank you not to mention the fellow's name in our hearing! It's no credit to your father's son to have anything to say to such vagabonds—"

"Take care, Mistress Finigan! take care! if you throw dirt on your respectable brother-in-law some of it will fall on yourself. Be wise in time, ma'am——"

"Take care *you*, Master Henry Herbert!" said Mrs. Murphy, provoked beyond endurance, and, rising slowly from her seat, she stood before the astonished young man with a look like that of an ancient Pythoness when about to deliver the oracular decision: "Take care you, an' don't make Bridget Murphys speak. *We know you*"—and she raised the fore-finger of her right hand with a warning gesture—"we know yourself an' your father, too—an' you'd best keep a civil tongue in your head when *we're* to the fore. Do you mind what I'm sayin' to you, now?"

Herbert was awed in spite of himself by the old woman's solemnity, and his bold eye fell before the fiery look that she fixed upon him. He muttered something about minding his own business for the time to come, and was turning away to leave the room when he caught sight of Bessy where she had retreated to the farther end of the room. Forgetting all about Luky Mulligan, he went up to her and made to take her hand.

"Why, Bessy, are *you* here?—how did I happen to overlook the blooming rose of Ardfinnan?—what! you won't shake hands with me?"

"I'd be obliged to you not to make so free, Mr. Herbert!" said Bessy, her cheek crimson with anger.

"Ha! ha! that's good," and Herbert laughed in a scoffing way that annoyed Bessy still more; "little Bessy putting on airs—copying after the Murphy family, upon my honor! Won't you give me your hand?"

"No, sir, *I will not*!" said Bessy with becoming spirit; "I don't want anything at all to do with you!"

"You don't, eh?" In an incredulous tone.

"No, I don't, sir!" said Bessy with unmistakeable sincerity; "believe my word, I don't!" And turning away coldly she asked Mrs. Finigan if she was going down stairs.

Yes, Ally was going down, and so was her mother. "In that case I may go, too," said Herbert with a forced laugh. He was both grieved and mortified by the change in Bessy's manner, a change which, half drunk as he was, he was at no loss to understand.

"If you'll go first, then, Mr. Herbert!" said Ally in as civil a tone as she could command. "It wouldn't be mannerly to leave you here after us."

"Bessy!" said Herbert with a strong effort to speak calmly, "Bessy! I have just a word to say, if you'll stop one minute."

"Not one word I'll hear, Mr. Herbert!" said Bessy with unusual vehemence, and she darted to the door as if anxious to escape the very sound of his voice; "I tell you I've nothing at all to do with you!" And before he could make any further effort to detain her, she was down stairs. Bidding Ned a hasty "good night" as she passed out, she hurried to put a safe distance between herself and Herbert.

"When it comes to that with him," said she to herself as she stepped lightly along Prince street to take the omnibus in the Bowery, "when it's come to that with him so soon, how will it be hereafter?" Thank God! oh! thank God I happened to see him!"

"That little cousin of yours has grown very saucy since she came to New York," said Herbert to Ned Finigan with the easy familiarity of their present intercourse, and he threw himself on a seat behind the bar.

Ned was a little surprised at first, but a moment's reflection and a glance at Herbert's face gave him to understand how the matter stood, and he laughed in his sleeve as he replied good-humoredly:

"I'm afraid, Mister Herbert, New York spoils many a one as well as Bessy."

"That's true," said Herbert, with apparent carelessness, "for there are your wife and mother-in-law up stairs, who

have been rating me like a pair of troopers—only the regard I have for yourself, Ned, I'd swear against ever crossing your threshold again."

"Hut, tut, Mr. Herbert!" said Ned evasively, "you have more sense than to mind what the likes of *them* say. I suppose it's makin' fun they were, an' *you* took it in earnest—that's all!"

"It may be so, Ned, it may be so! Holla! Dixon! is that you, old fellow?" And starting up he hurried to the door, where he had caught a glimpse of his worthy companion making signs for him to go out.

When Bessy reached home that evening, sorely troubled in mind, she found Fanny with a most ungracious aspect, sewing in the kitchen.

"What kept you?" she said in answer to Bessy's salutation. "I wonder at you to stay out so late."

"Why, it's only a quarter past nine," said Bessy as cheerfully as she could; "you don't call that late, do you?"

"It's late enough, and too late for a respectable female to be out alone. What do you think Mrs. Hibbard's been a-doing?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Bessy, taking off her bonnet and shawl.

"Why, she's bin and given me a table-cloth to hem, and I hurrying so with my own dress."

"Well! what of that? haven't you dresses enough for Sunday?"

"I know I have," Fanny replied with increasing petulance, "but that an't any reason why Mrs. Hibbard should ask me to do any sewing for *her*. I tell you it an't right."

"What did you say to Mrs. Hibbard when she asked you to do it?"

"Well! I just told her that I didn't engage to do sewing for her, and didn't want to do it. I said that I didn't wish to re-  
fu. & but that I'd rather not do any more. She said I had a

right to do it as it was for the servant's table, but I said, says I, that don't make any difference, Mrs. Hibbard! *it an't* my business and I shan't do it! I know my duty and I'm willing to do what's right, but nothing more!"

Fanny always enunciated her words most distinctly, bringing out every syllable with marked emphasis. Everything she said, therefore, was spoken in a decided and somewhat dictatorial tone that was anything but agreeable to the ear, and did not at all comport with the Christian humility so constantly professed by Fanny.

"Another thing I told Mrs. Hibbard," she went on, "that I shan't wash any more for that old nigger. I an't accustomed to do such washing, and I'm determined *not* to do it."

"Well, but, Fanny!" said Bessy, in her most persuasive tone, "poor Wash has always had his washing done in the house, and cross as Bridget was I never heard her object to it."

"I don't care what any one objects to," said Fanny loftily. "Nobody can teach *me* what is right or what is wrong—thank God! I know my duty, and I'm willing to do it at all times, but I didn't engage to wash for that old darkey, and *I shan't do it.*"

Bessy smiled. She was just thinking: "There it is over again," but she took care to keep her thoughts to herself, knowing the truth of the old proverb: "*It's ill playing with edged tools.*"

Still she thought she would venture another word of expostulation.

"But don't you know it's a charity, even, to wash the poor old man's clothes? He has no one to do it for him, and he couldn't very well afford to be paying out for it."

"Dear me! but we're charitable!" said Fanny with a toss of her head. "I guess I know what charity is, and I an't afraid but I'm doing my share of it. A girl that pays to three or four Confraternities out of her month's wages is surely not behind others in charity."

"Well! that's true enough, Fanny," said Bessy feelingly; "I know it's a good deal for you to do, and I hope God will reward *you* and every one else that helps to keep up the Confraternities, for, sure we all know what good they do,—but still *my* notion is, that it's just as much charity to do our old man's washing, and help to keep him clean and comfortable. Even if Mrs. Hibbard wishes it done, I think one will have their reward for doing it, as they would for any other act of charity, if they only do it with good will."

"That may be your notion, but it an't mine," Fanny replied in her authoritative way; "I'd rather do charity in some other way than washing for that old Wash."

"Oh! very well!" said Bessy, as she left the kitchen; "you can settle that with Mrs. Hibbard."



## CHAPTER XV.

Mrs. HIBBARD and Fanny parted on the washing question, and Fanny went off in high dudgeon, deeming herself a much-injured person. That Mrs. Hibbard should make so light of such extraordinary qualifications as *she* possessed, and actually deprive herself of her valuable services for the sake of an old nigger's "traps," was something so astounding to Fanny's self-conceit that she could hardly realize it to herself. It brought her down a little, but not for her spiritual advancement. She was humbled, it is true, but her humiliation brought her no nearer to true humility, on the contrary, she was farther from it than ever. The superstructure of pride—spiritual pride—towered too high and too strong for such a rebuff to bring it down. She was vexed and mortified, and very angry, and would not for a moment admit the supposition that she was in the wrong. That Mrs. Hibbard was wrong, nobody need pretend to deny,—who could, or who dare doubt *that* fact, but that Fanny Powers *was* wrong, or could possibly be wrong, under any given circumstances, was a moral, and, moreover, a *religious* impossibility. Quite so, Fanny thought, and, of course, what Fanny thought must be right.

She left in a very acrid humor, her eyes darting disdain from under the half-closed lids, and the very tip of her nose suggesting the idea of vinegar, if not something still sharper and more pungent.

"Good-bye, Bessy!" said she as she took up a bundle containing some of her most necessary articles of clothing, "I

hope *you'll* get a better companion than I was—and—Mrs. Hibbard a better servant!" which interpreted meant "I guess you won't, though!" She might have been fishing for a compliment, too, but if so she was disappointed, for Bessy had had enough of her empty piety, and was well content to get rid of her eternal self-laudation.

Fanny's place was filled next day by a little merry-faced dumpy woman somewhere in the neighborhood of forty. Her name was Onny Quigley, and she came to the house recommended by no less a person than Paul Brannigan, whose cousin she was.

"Though she's a blood-relation of my own," said Paul to Bessy, "I'm not a bit afeard to speak for her. She has been in a very good place for four or five years, and I know her mistress wouldn't part her now, only she's breakin' up house, and goin' away to foreign parts. I have that from the lady's own lips, and she said, by the same token, that Onny was worth her weight in gold, and she didn't believe there was such another little woman in New York city."

"Well! sure enough, there's no going beyond that," said Bessy laughing, "so on the strength of it we'll recommend Onny to Mrs. Hibbard."

She did accordingly, and neither she nor Mrs. Hibbard ever had reason to be sorry. Little fat Onny was the best and kindest and most considerate of fellow-servants, the most faithful and efficient of "help." She made no particular demonstration of piety, but she said her prayers—in Irish—every night and morning, went to Mass hail, rain, or shine, every Sunday and holy-day, and somehow little Onny never complained of want of time, or found it hard to get out in the morning. In fact she was never in "a fuss," never behind with anything, and many a turn she was able to do for Bessy or Ellen when either of them had a little more work than usual. Yet Onny was always in good humor, her round rosy face as bright as the full moon, and her large white teeth—

perhaps too much exposed by the good-natured smile that was ever on her lips. But nobody found fault with Onny's face, or Onny's looks, though, as Paul used to say, with the privilege of blood and long acquaintance, "to be sure Onny was behind the door, like himself, when beauty was given out—but no matter for that—people needn't take the book by the cover."

The longer they were together, Bessy and Onny were the better friends. Unlike Fanny, Onny was no reader, and never, by any chance, talked of what she knew, or extolled her own perfections in any way. If Mrs. Hibbard had occasion to find fault with anything she did, and indeed that seldom happened, Onny was neither hurt nor mortified.

"Well! I'm glad to know which way you like it done, ma'am!" was Onny's cheerful answer; "it's all the same to me, you know, only to please you." And Onny had never to be told again how that particular thing was to be done.

"How is it," said Bessy to her once, "how is it, Onny! that you are always content with whatever happens?"

"Why, child," laughed cheerful Onny, "there's no art in that. I engage to do people's work for them, and sure it isn't to please myself—it isn't my work, you see, but theirs, so whatever way they want it done, it's all the same to Onny Quigley. One mistress wants a thing done this way, another mistress wants it *that* way, well! it's my business to please them all, if I can. Even if I didn't do it for *their* sake I'd do it for God's sake, Bessy! I haven't the larnin', you see, like some to know all about religion and everything that way, but I always feel as if I was serving God when I'm serving them. He sets over me for the time; so I do their work as well as ever I can, and, do you know, Bessy! I never got a dozen hard words since I've been at service."

"I believe you, Onny!" said Bessy, her eyes moist with tears; "I believe you well!—she'd be a hard mistress that you wouldn't please, an' I tell you, there's few of them that

won't be pleased if a girl lays herself out to do it. Let them have what faults they may, they know the value of a faithful good girl when they meet her. To tell the truth, there's so many bad ones going that it makes people suspicious about them till they try them and see what's in them."

"True for you, Bessy!" said Onny, "there's a great deal in the girl's own hands, and I think there's many a one of them would be better off than they are if they'd only pay more attention to the old saying that 'a good servant makes a *good* mistress.' Well! I declare talk passes time—doesn't it, Bessy? I never found myself doing that job, and now it's finished."

She held it up triumphantly before the light—it was an old gray sock to which Onny had been adding a new foot now just completed. "The mistress wouldn't b'lieve me I'd have it done to-night—what'll she say now?" And Onny laughed with the light-hearted gaiety of fifteen.

Bessy in the same strain expressed her admiration; "and maybe Wash won't be pleased when he finds his old socks changed into new ones!—God give you the worth of it, Onny?" She spoke with feeling, for she was thinking of her pious and charitable friend Fanny, who thought it so far beneath her to do anything for "the old nigger."

If Bessy had been more conversant with book-learning, she might probably have said to herself: "The Athenians *know* what is good, but the Lacedemonians *practise* it." But Bessy had no need to go to classic lore for a simile, she had one to her hand in the Gospel narrative, and as she sat with her eyes fixed on Onny's beaming face, she murmured half aloud: "Isn't Fanny's piety like that of the proud Pharisee that the priest so often tells us about? Turning up her nose at every one that isn't as pious as herself and thanking God that she isn't like *them*. Now here's poor Onny that scarce knows B from a bull's foot and never praises herself at all, and still she does twice as much good as Fanny. She always seems to do the very thing that's best to be done, and everything goes

fair and smooth with her. Sure enough she's a good creature, and my heart warms to her."

A week or so after this Bessy was made happy by the receipt of a letter from home, full of that fond affection which is seldom or never found beyond the golden circle of the family. The news, too, was all good, better even than Bessy had expected. Her money was not needed, and her father advised her to put it in the Bank, as she was thinking of doing, till something turned up that she might want it herself. "As long as the Lord spares us our health, and sends us enough to eat and drink, and pay the landlord, we're well content," wrote Denis Conway; "for so far we've all that, and a little to spare, as you know yourself, Bessy, so we don't wish for anything in the whole world, barrin' the little *colleen bawn* that was a comfort to us all, till she took it in her head to go and push her fortune beyond the sea, and och! but she left us all lonesome. God grant you may never rue it, Bessy astore! but we rue your going every day and every hour of our lives. Well! no matter, 'God is good,' as I tell your mother when she's down-hearted about you. 'God is good,' says I, 'and He'll take care of Bessy, and maybe bring her back to us some day when we're in need of comfort. She'll come in on the floor to us, Polly! like the sun when the day's dark and dull, so leave it all to God, woman dear! and you'll see how things will turn out.' Still it's hard to get your poor mother persuaded not to fret. For a long time after you went, she was hardly fit for anything, the way she'd cry and lament, and she used to keep watching, watching the door as if you ought to be coming back to her. Of late, she's beginnin' to be a little better reconciled, and she says if she only lives to see you again she's content to wait for God's good time." Then followed a long account of all the family affairs, and messages from all the neighbors, ay! for miles round. The priests were well, thanks be to God for it, and glad to hear from Bessy. As for the Murphys, Denis thought they'd have been as well

at home, "and that's my word coming true," said he, "for I often told Peery he had best let well enough alone, and stay at home as long as he could *live* at home. Sure the world knows that all that goes to America can't do well—they're not all of the right stuff for doin' well anywhere, and for one that has good luck and good guiding half a dozen has not. There's thousands of people goes out to America every year that are not fit to make a decent living at home or abroad, and myself thinks that the like of them have a worse chance abroad than they'd have at home. I suppose that's what leaves so many of them the poor creatures you say they are in America."

"So I think that's all I have to say," continued Denis, "only I was near forgettin' to ask you what's the meanin' of all this talk about you and young Herbert? Only we know you have the grace of God about you we'd be afeard that there might be truth in it, for it would be a great temptation to most girls of your age to have the landlord's son looking after them. But you know well enough, Bessy, that it isn't for a good end he'd be talkin' to you, and you know the dirty drop that's in him, and so your mother and me doesn't feel a bit uneasy, because we know you have the fear of God before your eyes, and that the Holy Mother of God can protect you in America as well as at home, and will never let you open your ears or your heart to a scape-grace like young Herbert that's only makin' game of you, maybe, or followin' you for his own bad ends. Let no one see you in his company late or early, and if you meet him on the street don't stop to bid him the time of day. That's your mother's advice and mine, and we know you'll not go beyond what we say. You never did, and you'll not do it now."

"God in Heaven forbid!" was Bessy's fervent ejaculation, as she kissed the letter again and again, and then folding it carefully placed it in her bosom as the dearest thing she had on earth. "That would be the black day for me when I disobeyed the best of fathers and mothers! Oh no! if I thought

it would ever come to that with me I'd be willin' to die the night before the morrow—dear knows I would! As for Herbert, thank God! the greatest danger's past—the only danger was that I might give in to marry him some time if he kept as he was—but *now*—oh! indeed there's little danger now of any such thing."

Bessy sat a long time thinking of all that was in her precious letter, and wondering would it ever be her happy lot to rest again under the old roof-tree of her childhood's home. "Unlikelier things came to pass," said she hopefully, "and because it *may* come to pass, I'll work—oh my! but I will—and do everything I can to increase my little store—and who knows but what my father says might one day or another come to pass, too?—who knows?" One pleasant thought brings on another, and Bessy's face soon brightened with another possibility. "And who knows but I'd be sending or giving Father Ryan something worth while for his new church and school-house. Well! sure enough, if I ever have money enough to go home with, there's many a thing I can do!"

Bessy was aroused from her delicious dream by a message from Mrs. Hibbard that she wanted her down stairs. Laying aside the work which she had been doing, Bessy hastened down and found the family assembled in the back parlor for evening worship.

"Ellen!" said Mrs. Hibbard, "you can go down now for Onny." Ellen disappeared. "Bessy!" said her mistress, then, with a hesitation of manner that Bessy could not at the moment understand: "Bessy! we are going to prayers, and I want you all to join."

"Dear me!" said Bessy to herself, "this is a new move. What's in the wind now?" Aloud she said very quietly, "You know *we're* all Catholics, ma'am, and we can't join in your prayers."

"Bessy! did I understand you aright?" asked Mrs. Hibbard in real or affected surprise. "I thought you were too

good a girl to refuse to join in the prayers of any family with whom you lived !”

“ Catholics are forbidden to join in prayer, ma’am, with any except people of their own persuasion.”

“ And why, may I ask ?”

“ Why, because the prayers are not the same, and the belief isn’t the same either——”

“ Bessy !” said Mrs. Hibbard sharply, “ we believe in the Lord Christ and His atonement !”

“ I know you do, ma’am,” said Bessy in a deprecating tone, “ but still there’s many things *we* believe that you don’t, so wo couldn’t pray with you at all !”

“ Oh ! very well !” said the lady coldly, “ we’ll try the others. I hope they are not all so—so *very* rigid as you, Bessy !”

But the others were not much more yielding than Bessy—Onny refused flatly and at once—Ellen hesitated and seemed to calculate the possible consequences of a refusal, but catching the eyes of her two companions she took heart of grace and said no ! she wouldn’t do what would hurt her soul.

“ Hurt your soul !” repeated the mistress haughtily and angrily. “ Do you mean to say that it would hurt your soul to pray with *us* ?”

“ Well ! ma’am, I don’t know much myself, God help me !” said Ellen stoutly, “ but I’ll stand by whatever Bessy and Onny say, for I know they’ll say and do what’s right.”

“ In that case,” said Mrs. Hibbard sternly, “ you can all—but—you may go down stairs for the present. Wash ! you, of course, remain !”

Much did the girls wonder at this sudden prayer-mania of Mrs. Hibbard’s. They could not possibly unravel the mystery unless on the supposition that their mistress had turned Quaker and was moved by the spirit to move *them*. They were wrong in their calculations—it was the Reverend Joel McClashen who had moved her directly, let the spiritual agency be as it



might. That reverend gentleman, a Wesleyan Methodist by profession, had been a frequent visitor of late at Mrs. Hibbard's, with the ostensible view of converting the lady from Episcopallianism, although there were not wanting some uncharitable persons of both persuasions who shrewdly surmised that the rich and still attractive widow was personally of more importance than the convert in the Rev. Joel's estimation. However that might be, the good gentleman had taken pains to convince Mrs. Hibbard that a heavy responsibility rested on her with regard to her Catholic help, and that there were no hopes of her own salvation unless she snatched those brands from the burning. As a first step in that direction, evening prayer was recommended, including, of course, Scriptural reading. Under this new and strong influence it was that Bessy Conway and her fellow-servants were summoned to assist at family-prayers, and great was Mrs. Hibbard's mortification when they manifested so unexpectedly their Romish obstinacy.

She blamed Bessy more than any of the others, and on her head she emptied the vial of her wrath. It was in vain that the girl excused herself on the score of conscience and obedience to the Church; nothing she would say could extenuate the offence, for the Rev. Joel considered her conduct most contumacious, and advised Mrs. Hibbard to get rid of her by all means. At another time and under other circumstances, Mrs. Hibbard would have been most unwilling to part with Bessy, but advice from such a godly minister as the Rev. Joel McClashen was equivalent to a command, and Bessy was dismissed at a week's notice. Onny and Ellen were kept—Mrs. Hibbard prudently calculating the unpleasant consequences to herself and family of a general clearing out, especially as Ellen had been some years in the house and Onny was—what we have described her.

Before Bessy left the house she had an excellent place secured with another friend of Mrs. Walters, a Catholic lady

whose family was as small as her means were large. She was the wife of an eminent physician in large and lucrative practice, yet they lived in a plain, quiet way, being both averse to parade and ostentation and the turmoil and tumult of society. Their family consisted of a daughter of ten or twelve, and a niece of the Doctor's, some years older. They had a son, too, but he was then at college preparing for his father's profession. It was just the place for Bessy, and somehow her heart told her so from the time she first set her foot within the door.

"There's a home-look about everything in it," said she to Onny, "and I think, for what I saw of them, the people are just as homely in their ways. There's nothing troubling me leaving here only parting with *you*, Onny, for I hardly expect to fall in with such another comrade girl."

"Hut! tut!" said Onny smiling through her tears, "don't be saying that!—don't you know the old saying *Hope well and have well*. There's plenty of good decent girls living out in New York, and it's bad or you'll meet better than poor Onny Quigley."

Bessy shook her head, and wiped away a trickling tear, and said she didn't know about that. "At any rate," said she, "I'll be living in hopes that we'll be together again, and that maybe before long."

"Well! God grant it!" was Onny's response, and they said no more about it at the time. The word was lightly said, then, but it came out true before many months went by.

Before Bessy was so happy as to get Onny again for her companion she had many a sad and comfortless day with others. It so happened that Mrs. Delany was obliged to change her cook several times during the first three months, and it also happened, probably for the same reasons, that Bessy could not make a friend of any of these birds of passage. Many a time she was tempted to tell her mistress about Onny, but being so short a time in the house herself she was

unwilling to make so free as to recommend another, and thought it best to wait a little longer.

She found as usual that one of the greatest troubles was to get these comers and goers out to Mass on Sunday mornings. Mrs. Delany being a conscientious Catholic, of course felt it her duty to see that no one in the house missed hearing Mass on days of obligation, and on the previous evening she made it a point to tell each of the girls at what hour she was to go out in the morning. One would think that should be sufficient, but no such thing. If Mrs. Delany were out early herself, her appointment with regard to the hour was of no account. Bessy was the only one that made it a point to do just as her mistress told her. It was only another girl that was kept in the house, but from the frequent changing of that one, she was always a stranger. However it happened, of five or six girls who had undertaken Mrs. Delany's kitchen and laundry-work within as many months, every one was negligent, and, indeed, utterly indifferent about hearing Mass. It was the same scene over and over again repeated, and if Bessy had been surprised at Sally and Bridget in Mrs. Hibbard's, for their carelessness about this important duty of religion, she was shocked at those whom she saw in Mrs. Delany's, for there in a Catholic family, whose members were all attentive to their own duties and regular in their life, there seemed to be no excuse.

Every Sunday morning as regularly as the day came round, there was some trouble of this kind. When Mrs. Delany came in from eight o'clock Mass:

"Well! Bessy, has Anne been to Mass?"

"N—no, ma'am!"

"No! why, you don't say so?"

Down to the kitchen goes Mrs. Delany and finds Anne moving about with a very conscious look as though she knew well she was doing wrong.

"Have you been at Church, Anne?" the mistress asks.

"No, ma'am!"

"No! and why not pray? Did I not tell you to go to seven o'clock Mass?" No answer—Anne bends over something she is doing, or pretending to do.

"Anne!" repeats the mistress a little angrily, "why did you not go to Mass at the time appointed?"

Anne tries at first to excuse herself on the usual plea, want of time—the breakfast to be got, and so forth.

"Nonsense, girl!" says Mrs. Delany, "that is no excuse. I told you not to wait for anything more than lighting the fire and leaving your tea-kettle on, then hurry off to Church, and by so doing you could easily be out from here full twenty minutes before the time."

"Well! Mrs. Delany," said Anne, thus driven to extremity and determined to brave it out, "well, Mrs. Delany, I an't used to going out so early and I don't like it—that's the truth of it!"

"How are we to manage, then? You cannot expect us to wait later than nine o'clock for our breakfast, and it will take at least an hour to prepare it."

"Well! I an't particular about going to-day—I'll wait till next Sunday." This with an affectation of extreme good-nature.

"But, you can't wait till next Sunday—you must hear Mass *every* Sunday—if you fail in that, without just cause of excuse, you commit a mortal sin, and I would incur the same penalty if I allowed you to remain at home. You must get ready and go now—if you hurry, you will be in time for nine o'clock Mass, at least the Mass cannot be far advanced."

"I can't go," says Anne, sullenly, "till I get in the breakfast."

"Never mind the breakfast—we will see to that—go at once, for you haven't a moment to lose."

Away tramps Anne upstairs, with a slow and heavy step—on one of the landings meets Bessy.

"What's wrong with you, Anne! you look fretted."

"Don't be botherin' me, Bessy! purty work, indeed, about Mass, Mass—it's no wonder that girls don't like to live in Catholic houses, it's a real bother, it is—poking, poking after folks about Mass and all such things. I guess it's the last time I'll work in a Catholic family. Mortal sin, indeed!"

This was partly to herself, partly to Bessy who was on her way down stairs; by the time Anne reached the top Bessy was at the bottom, but she could hear the grumbling voice talking all the way up.

Going down to put the breakfast on the table, as she saw Anne was only going out then, Bessy found her mistress sitting pensively in the dining-room, her fair smooth brow contracted with a frown that was by no means habitual. She was a tall, graceful woman in the prime of life, with those delicate, intellectual features and that peculiar modesty of expression characteristic of the genuine Irish lady. It was only necessary to hear Mrs. Delany speak to know that her youth had been passed in the polished capital of her native land. Its silvery accent was on her tongue, its frank, cordial, and most winning impress on every feature and in every gesture of her fine face. She always wore curls, short ringlets, in the fashion of her earlier days, probably because they were particularly becoming to her small and well-formed head.

"Bessy," said Mrs. Delany, "I say to you what I wouldn't say to almost any other young person in your situation, because I know your faith is strong and lively, and your religious instruction beyond that of many others of your class. I feel humbled and mortified this day. I do, indeed, Bessy!"

"Why, dear me! how is that, ma'am?" said Bessy in some alarm, as she placed the coffee-pot upon the table.

"Because of the half-heathen state to which I see so many Irish girls reduced here. You have seen a good many of them yourself since you have been in New York—have you seen any of them fully impressed with the solemn obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and holydays?—for my part, I

have met very, very few during the ten or twelve years I have been employing them—almost every one of them gives me the same trouble to get them out on Sunday morning. It makes me shudder to think how they act when in Protestant families. (That will do, Bessy!—now ring the bell!) How can we account for it?"

"Well, I think, ma'am," said Bessy modestly, "it's because they're most of their time amongst Protestants and have nobody to put them in mind of their duty if they're inclined to neglect it."

"That may account for it," said Mrs. Delany thoughtfully, as she took her place at the table, "but it certainly does not excuse it—being brought up in a Catholic country by Catholic parents they cannot be ignorant of their obligation to hear Mass, and it's a shame—a disgrace to their country to see so many of them careless and indifferent—nay, unwilling to go to the house of God. It certainly gives me great pain to see them as they are when I think of the miles and miles their parents used to travel at home in order to hear Mass, and that in all weathers. Oh! indeed it would be well for very many of them that they never left the humble roof of those pious Christian parents!"

By this time the Doctor and the young ladies had made their appearance, and Bessy finding that her presence was not required, went up stairs to do some of her own work, having first asked Mrs. Delany if she would please to ring for her when she wanted the breakfast things removed.

When she returned at the sound of the bell, she found the family still discussing the same subject which had occupied Mrs. Delany's thoughts. They had, however, diverged a little from the original idea. They were speaking of High Mass and the Doctor declared it very tiresome with its ceremonies, and its music, and all the rest. "For my part," said he, "I always feel more devotion at a Low Mass—I see you smile, Maria! Of course, your notions are altogether different——"

"Indeed they are, my dear, very different! There is nothing affords me greater happiness than to make one of the faithful assembled for solemn and public worship. I am only half satisfied, as it were, with a Low Mass, for the High Mass, you know, is the Parish Mass, and I think every one that can is bound to assist at it. If they do not, they miss the sermon, and that, you will allow, is something. But to me the couple of hours spent at Grand Mass are like the green spot in the desert of life—surrounded by everything sacred and venerable, with prayer, and praise, and music, and the smoke of incense floating around, oh! those are indeed moments of peace, when the vexed and world-harassed heart throws off the burden of its week-long cares, and is at rest."

There was so much feeling and fervor in Mrs. Delany's tone and manner that it brought the tears to Bessy's eyes, and even the Doctor forgot for the time his laughter-loving propensity. He seldom went to Grand Mass, on the plea of professional duty, but he went that day and assisted with more recollection than his wife had ever seen before.

## CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Bessy succeeded at last in having Onny once more for a comrade she thought herself about as happy as she could be, away from home. She had a good place, a mistress whom she loved almost as well as Mrs. Walters, with the great advantage of being of her own religion, and Onny for her companion. She *was* happy, and her life flowed on tranquilly and smoothly in the cheerful performance of every duty. She heard again from home—all was well there, too, and it seemed to Bessy that she had hardly anything to wish for. Her funds in the Savings' Bank were steadily increasing, and the world was going well with her—so well, indeed, that a secret fear was knocking at her heart, for she said to herself that such peace and contentment are not the lot of Christians here below.

Herbert she had not seen since she went to Mrs. Delany's, and she began to hope that something else had attracted his attention, and he might possibly trouble her no more. Ever since she saw him at Ned Finigan's she had carefully avoided going there, and the Finigans, at a loss for the reason of her absence, were so offended that they never went to see what it meant, so that all intercourse between them had ceased.

Month rolled by after month, and finally glided into years—three had already passed since Bessy came to America, and somewhat over two since the CASTLE INN first “caught the passing eye” in Prince street. And how had it fared ever since with the master and mistress of the Castle? We shall see.



It was a warm sultry evening in the middle of August, and Ned Finigan was sitting in an armed chair behind the bar looking so unlike himself that no one could have recognized him for the same man who helped to keep the steerage passengers of the *Garrick* alive on his way out. Dull and heavy and stolid he sat there with that drunken gravity of countenance characteristic of the hardened, inveterate drunkard. If Ned was large and somewhat bulky before, he was now unwieldy and a burden to himself. The fine, manly, athletic fellow, whose Herculean proportions excited the admiration of all who saw him had changed in those few short years into that cumbrous load of blubber—the hale, fresh, good-humored face was no longer what it had been—broad and coarse and covered with a sort of purple hue, its unsightliness was further increased by sundry blotches and carbuncles, and the eyes, once bright and twinkling with good humor, were now dull and unmeaning, protruding far beyond their sockets. An altered man was Ned Finigan, and an altered woman, too, was his wife. What Ned had gained in flesh, Ally had lost. All that hearty plumpness that poor Ally brought with her from the healthful plains of Tipperary had gone, leaving nothing behind but skin and bone and a fretted-looking worn countenance over which fifteen years, instead of three or four, would seem to have passed. Her dress was still good as far as material went, but there was a neglected, untidy look about everything on her that contrasted painfully with the neat, tidy “round-about” little woman that Ally used to be. The lines of care were deeply indented on her shrunken features, and her dapper little form was bent with trouble and anxiety, if not with years. Surely things were not going as well with the Finigans as they did in days gone by. Whether wealth had been flowing into their coffers or not, they were far from being either happy or prosperous. That was plain.

And who were the two snobbish-looking fellows that entered the bar-room, arm in arm, that dull summer evening,

just as the day was fading into night? Why, one of them, to be sure, was Dandy Dixon, and the other Henry Herbert. There was not much change in either of them as to outward appearance. Dixon was still the swaggering "swell," combed and moustached as carefully as ever, with his small hat resting on the top of his frizzled locks as jauntily as could be. Herbert was still the same handsome, reckless-looking fellow, as well dressed as usual, but dissipated-looking withal; his cheek habitually flushed, and his eye habitually restless and unsteady. *His* habits had not been improving—that also was plain. He and his worthy companion had been laughing obstreperously as they entered, but seeing Mrs. Finigan behind the bar with Ned, Herbert winked at the other, and coughed significantly. Nods being duly exchanged, Herbert said in his frank way:

"Good evening, Ned; what's the matter that you look so grave? Thinking of the great Repeal demonstrations at home, eh?"

"Well, no—I wasn't thinking of anything—in particular."—

"You wasn't, eh? Well, anyhow, send us in three stiff brandy-and-waters—two for us and one for you, and come along in to take it—cigars, you know, in quantity."

"Deed and he'll not, then, Mr. Herbert," put in Ally, sharply; "not a drop of it he'll taste *this* bout, anyhow."

Herbert laughed, and Dixon smiled superciliously.

"What! little Mrs. Finigan mounting guard!—putting on the inexpressibles!" roared Herbert. "Well, if that isn't rich!"

"Laugh as much as you like," said Ally, "it'll not do *me* any harm."

Ned said nothing, but kept on mixing the liquor according to order. When the three glasses stood ready on the waiter, flanked with a bunch of cigars, he ordered Ally to let him pass.

"Not a foot you'll pass here, Ned; I tell you that now!"

said the little woman with a most warlike air, and placing her arms a-kimbo, so as to increase her breadth. "Sit down there, and I'll send in the two glasses for the gentlemen."

"Nonsense, woman!" grunted Ned; "get out of the way with your foolery!" and he tried to shove her aside, but did not succeed.

"You may just as well sit down," said Ally, with a most determined air; "you have taken enough for this day. Give me that salver till I send it in."

Roused from his torpor by the mocking laughter of Dixon and Herbert, and the good-natured raillery of one or two others who chanced to be present, Ned raised his foot and gave poor Ally a kick that sent her far enough out of his way, and in he marched with the air of a conqueror, followed by the two worthy associates.

"Well," said Ally, raising her tearful eyes, "it's good there's a God in Heaven to see all this; if there wasn't what 'id become of the likes of me?" And smothering her tears, she went on with her work, she was helping her girl to wash glasses.

"I don't see for the life of me, Ned," said Herbert, "what's got into your wife's head of late; she seems to have lost what manners she ever had. Isn't it so, Dixon?"

"Quite so—dem it, quite so!" chimed in the submissive echo, "can't get to the bottom of Mrs. Finigan's—hem—ha—shall I say—impudence?"

"Don't say impudence, Mr. Dixon! don't, if you please!" said Ned stupidly, "my little woman isn't impudent—never was, sir—but you see, women haven't the same notions as we have about things, and Ally has taken it into her head that I take—ahem!—that I take a little more than I ought by times. That's the whole truth, now, and you needn't take it to yourself, at all, Mister Herbert! nor Mister Dixon, neither. Ally thinks a power of you both, gentlemen, but—but—"

"Much obliged to her," said Herbert drily, "I'm bound to

say, if she does, she takes a confounded queer way of showing it. No matter, we're *your* friends, Ned! and as long as the Castle keeps above ground or you on your legs we'll stand to both. Won't we, Dixon?"

"Undoubtedly we will," said Dixon absently.

"I'm entirely obliged to you, gentlemen, for your good wish," said Ned, "and especially Mister Herbert there in regard to the little grudge that was between us on account of that colleen, Bessy——"

"Oh! don't mention it, don't mention it," said Herbert, magnanimously, but his color rose very high, "It's all passed now, you know, and I don't go in for ripping up old sores. Let us have another round, or rather a bottle of that same brandy! I want to hear the long-promised story of that plucky butcher, your illustrious ancestor, Ned, who kept Cromwell on the wrong side of Ardfinnan."

Ned desired nothing better, and he hurried away to get in the delectable beverage which was to season his narration of Jerry Fahy's valorous exploit. It might have been well for him if the significant nods and winks exchanged between the two he left had come under his observation, or if Ally's renewed expostulation had been attended to—but neither was the case. Herbert and his associate took good care that their stupified host did *not* see what was passing between them, and Ned only gave Ally an ill-served answer for her pains, then took his way back to the inner room where his company awaited him and the bottle.

"Ned!" said Herbert, as mine host set the bottle on the table, "what has become of your lordly friend, Paul Brannigan? I haven't set eyes on him in an age."

"Well! he doesn't come here as often as he used," said Ned, "somebody told me he wasn't in the best of health these last days."

"Perhaps he has gone the way of all flesh—eh, Ned?" This was by way of a joke, but it came harsh and bitter from the

heart. "Likely his sable majesty thinks he has served him long enough here, and wants his company down below. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" echoed Dixon; "he's rather a queer customer, that hunchback!—he's got an eye like a rattlesnake!—quite *fascinating*, by Jupiter!"

"Well! Mister Herbert," said Ned in his dull, stolid way, "there's many a man makes a great show in the world that doesn't do so much good as the same Paul. You don't know him, sir, or you wouldn't name himself and the Old Fellow in the same breath."

"I know him like a book!" said Herbert gloomily and musingly; suddenly starting, he struck the table with his fist: "I'll tell you what it is, Ned!" he said vehemently, "I think that misshapen, misbegotten imp has an eye on your pretty cousin, Bessy Conway!"

This was turning the tables with a vengeance, and Ned, fuddled as he was, laughed long and loud at the droll idea. "Well! Master Henry," said he, "sure enough you beat the world for fun!"

"If you take that for fun you're much mistaken," Herbert gravely returned, "I never was more in earnest, I give you my word!"

"If I thought as you do," said Dixon, reaching over to light his cigar at Herbert's, "I would certainly treat the fellow to a cold bath some of these warm days to bring him back to his senses."

Little thought any of the trio who were making so merry at Paul's expense that Paul was part of the time within earshot of their discourse. It so happened, that evening, that the little man had strolled up the Bowery after his supper, and finding himself, before he was aware, as far as Prince street, he thought he would just drop in to see the Finigans. He found Ally with her eyes red and swollen, and her face more flushed than he had ever seen it. There were several persons in the

bar-room, and yet Ally could not restrain herself, but the moment she saw Paul her tears burst out anew, and she reached him her hand with a gush of feeling that astonished him.

"Bless my soul! what's this at all, Mrs. Finigan? Has anything happened Ned?"

"Nothing new, Paul! nothing new," sobbed out Ally, lowering her voice to a whisper so as to reach only the ear for which it was meant; "he's at his old trade again worse than ever. He's ruining himself as fast as he can, and there's no earthly use talking to him. God help me! I don't know what to do!"

"Does Herbert frequent the house still?"

"Oh! then, indeed, he does, to our sad misfortune. He has him in now, himself and that big fellow, Dixon. Whatever delight they take in *his* company, they can't want him when they're here, if it's true to themselves."

"Could you put me anywhere near without they seein' me, Mrs. Finigan? I'd like to hear what's goin' on among them, just for a reason I have." And he nodded significantly at Ally, who, after looking him steadily in the face for a moment, opened the door of the little room adjoining the larger one, and, pointing to a small window high in the partition-wall, she placed a chair under it and whispered: "It's an inch or so open, Paul. God bless you! and keep a watch on them, for they're up to something that's not for our good!—my trust is in you next to God himself!"

It so happened that there were no others in the room (a thing rather unusual at that hour), so the three talked without much restraint, naturally supposing themselves free from observation.

The conversation was at first desultory and with little interest for Paul. It was the ordinary "table-talk" of the tavern, nothing more, nothing less, and our friend breathed many a fretful ejaculation of disappointment, for such scenes were not to his liking, and he never willingly put himself in the way

of seeing them. All at once, however, his attention was excited. Herbert laid his arm on the table, and leaning over towards Ned asked, in the most confidential way possible :

"Now do tell me, Ned! like a good, honest fellow as you are, has this business answered your expectations?"

"Well! I'll just tell you how that is, Mister Herbert!" said Ned, with a desperate effort to make his words intelligible, "I think it *has*—All thinks it hasn't. There's no doubt but we have made money," and he set his head a little to one side and closed one eye knowingly—"we have made money, and, you know, Mr. Herbert, that's the main thing—*money makes the mare go*, as my old uncle Terence used to say—he had a nice penny of his own, too, for he was a pig-jobber, sir, and used to go to Liverpool once a fortnight or so, and, sure enough, he could pick up money like slate stones——"

"But about yourself and the *Castle*, Ned? You say you have made money—what more did you want?"

"It isn't me that's dissatisfied, sir! it's Ally—she thinks—she thinks——"

"Come, out with it, man!—let us hear what she thinks!—we're curious to know."

"Why, she thinks the business doesn't agree with me—ha! ha! ha!—she's a mighty careful woman, you see, and thinks people ought to live by rule, and a man be as steady as a judge every day of his life. There's no come or go in Ally, Mister Herbert!—she's a tight little screw, and nothing else."

"Pooh! pooh! can't you screw her out a bit? Coax her a little, and oil her occasionally." He pointed significantly to his glass.

"It wouldn't do, sir, it wouldn't do," and Ned shook his head emphatically; "she doesn't touch it at all. She'd be afeard of gettin' fat like me—ha! ha! ha!—and, I protest she's tearin' the flesh off my bones on account of that same fat. She says I'm a burden to myself and every one else. By the

laws! she's not far wrong in that!" he added, parenthetically. "What do you think's the cause of it, Mister Herbert?"

Herbert and Dixon exchanged looks, and the latter drew his hand over his face affectedly, in order to conceal the smile that would come. Herbert tried hard to preserve his gravity as he hastened to answer:

"Well! it's something new to hear a man complain of being in good condition. Isn't it a sign you live well, and haven't to work hard—that you lead a gentleman's life, in fact?"

"Of course," subjoined Dixon, "of course. If our friend could only get up a good smart fit of the gout, he would pass for a born gentleman. Ha! ha! ha!"

"He! he! he!" chuckled Ned, "I wish you could hear our Ally sometimes—why, it was only yesterday she told me if I didn't leave off drinking, the devil would carry me off body and bones some day. Christ save us! what's that?" he cried suddenly, fixing his great staring eyes on the little window, opposite to which he was sitting.

Herbert and Dixon started up in alarm, and following the direction of Ned's eyes, glanced up at the window. Nothing was there but the white curtain.

"What the d——l did you see?" cried Herbert angrily.

"It was just himself—Ally was right—oh Lord have mercy on me!"

His eyes were still fixed on the window and his words were to himself—he seemed to forget that others were present.

"The confounded fellow has lost his wits, I believe!" said Herbert to his companion; "let's see if we can't pound them into him again." So saying he struck Ned a smart thump over the shoulder. "Stir up, man! stir up! what did you see?"

"I saw the devil—he opened that window a little bit and, thrust in such a face—with a pair of eyes, Lord save us! blazing like two coals of fire!"

"Stuff!" said Herbert contemptuously. "It's the brandy getting to your head."



"I tell you," said Ned, doggedly, "I saw the face up there as plain as I see yours now."

"We'll soon see whether you did or not," said Herbert, and darting to the door between the rooms, he threw it open. The flood of light from the larger room pouring into the smaller, revealed every part of it with sufficient distinctness, but no living thing was there. The window was closed, but the door was a little ajar, which, of course, was nothing remarkable, so Ned was quizzed unmercifully by Herbert and his friend about the visit he had had from "Old Harry," and the two laughed till their sides ached at his woe-begone expression of countenance.

Ned was quite sobered by the fright, and seeing the two worthies about to beat a retreat, he earnestly besought them not to tell Ally what had occurred.

"If you do," said he, "I'll never hear the last of it—you see it would give her the whip-handle, and maybe she wouldn't make me smoke."

"Pooh, man! what of *her* raillery!" said Herbert, with a strange gloomy look, "she wouldn't *ride you on a rail*, would she?"

Before Ned could ask what he meant by that, Herbert had left the room, followed closely by Dixon.

"You'd better see to that man of yours," said they to Ally, as they passed; "it isn't well to leave him alone; he has frightened us away."

"The Lord between us and harm!" cried Ally, running in breathless, "what's the matter with you, Ned, honey?"

"What do you see wrong with me?" said Ned, gruffly, "I'm just goin' out to the bar. Is there many there?"

The forced calmness of Ned's tone, and the ashy paleness of his face were both plain to Ally's eye, but seeing that he avoided her scrutiny, she deemed it unwise to press him. So they went back together to their business, and although each was occupied by painful thoughts, perhaps dark forebodings,

there was no confidence subsisting between them, and neither gave the other a hint of what was passing in their minds.

That same evening, whilst Herbert was working his evil spell on Ned Finigan, Bessy Conway was sitting alone in the kitchen—Onny having gone out to make some purchases—when a knock came to the basement door, and on going to open it, she saw a tall, emaciated woman, with a wretched-looking infant in her arms, and one a couple of years older clinging to her skirt.

"I want a little help," said the woman, somewhat imperatively, and whether it was the voice or the manner of speaking, Bessy started, it seemed so familiar. She tried to catch a glimpse of the features, but the woman drew back into the shade and in a lower tone, renewed her request for some assistance.

"My husband broke his leg three weeks ago, and is gone to hospital, said she," and *I* can't leave these young ones to go to work, so we ha'nt got a thing in the house."

"God help you, poor woman!" said Bessy compassionately, "I'll go and see if there's anything for you."

She returned in a few moments with a large slice of bread and some cold meat. The moment the child saw it she clapped her tiny hands and laughed:

"Ha! ha! mother, I guess we sha'nt give father any—shall we? He's so drunk, you know, he can't eat—can he?"

"Shut up!" said the mother angrily, and the word was hardly out of her head when Bessy darted forward and looked up in her face.

"The Lord in heaven save us! is it you, Sally?"

"I guess you're under a mistake," said the pauper-woman sharply, "my name a'nt Sally. Come along, you young d—l!" and seizing the child by the arm she shook it fiercely, then dragged it up the area steps crying piteously.

Bessy stood a moment looking after the miserable group, wondering could it be Sally she had seen, or was it but an

optical delusion. That moment's thought convinced her that her eyes had not deceived her. The figure, the face—altered as it was—the voice—the manner—all were the same, and doubt once dispelled, Bessy's next impulse was to go up the steps and see whether the woman was still in sight. The night was dark and cloudy, but the light of the lamp revealed her long, lank figure moving rapidly along, dragging the still squalling child by the hand. She had not reached the second lamp-post when a miserable tatterdemalion of a man approached her, and Bessy could hear distinctly the voice of the child as it clung in terror to its wretched parent, crying in piteous accents:

"Oh! daddy! don't beat mammy! She ha'nt got noting—noting at all!"

It was easy to understand this heart-moving scene, and Bessy did understand it, and as the light of the lamp fell full on the man's face she was at no loss to recognize the height of the black moustache, the veritable Jim, for whose sweet company and the matrimonial expectations following therefrom, Sally had told so many lies, spent so much money, and finally, lost the best place she ever had.

Bessy had seen and heard enough. She could easily imagine the altercation between such a couple in such circumstances—the wretched, profligate husband watching the squalid partner of his misery as she made her dreary rounds in quest of food for herself and her starving little ones—watching her with the hope that some charitable hand would give her a few pence which he might possibly succeed in obtaining from her either by threats or persuasion, to supply his insatiable maw with the vile stuff for which alone he lived. Oh! it was horrible! horrible! and Bessy was only too glad to escape back into the comfortable kitchen where vice or depravity dared not enter.

"So that is the end, thought she, of all Sally's dancing and visiting and dressing up, and lying and scheming!—how often

I have seen her mimicking others, even those she was bound to respect—what a sight she is now herself!—she wouldn't bear a word, or let any one say she did wrong, but she'd fly at them like a wasp—now she has to put up with everything and ask her bit from door to door, in misery and dirt and rags, with her drunken brute of a husband watching to take what she begs for herself and her children! Well! sure enough, that's a warning to me and every one like me! And when I think of how comfortable and happy that girl might be, if it wasn't her own fault! Still, it's a pity of her, and I hope she'll come round this way again, for I'd like to do what I could to help her."

But Sally never came that way again, and when weeks and months passed and she came no more, Bessy almost persuaded herself that the dismal scene of that night was, after all, but a dream. It was not a dream, unfortunately, for Sally. She had married her favorite Jim, and found, when too late, that Jim had a decided aversion for anything in the shape of work. As for taking a drop, well! that was his weakness, and she didn't mind—not she. She'd never grumble if Jim took a drop, and a good drop, too, if he'd only keep the pot boiling brown for her, and supply her with a certain portion of those edibles commonly called bread and butter. But that would involve the necessity of work, which being opposed to Jim's principles, was altogether out of the question. So, under one pretence or another, Jim managed to evade the common law of labor, and throw the burden on Sally's shoulders. One of them had to work, that was certain, and although Sally had no great taste for work any more than Jim, hunger soon drove her to it. Hard words and soft words, scolding and wheedling were alike thrown away on Jim, he never could be got to work more than one day at a time, and that at intervals lengthening as time rolled on. At first he would go on a *spree* once a week or so, lounging meanwhile about *home*—i. e., a very, very small back room on the fourth story of a tenement-house. After

awhile the *spree* extended itself gradually from day to day till it swallowed up the week, and finally Jim's whole life was one continued *spree*, and he became the hardened, hopeless, incurable drunkard we have seen him.

It may well be supposed that Sally's natural acerbity of temper was not sweetened any by her miserable marriage. To say the truth, if she had to work for herself and Jim she made the shabby fellow pay as well for it. She kept scolding him from morning till night, and from night till morning, but as Jim used to say to his confidential friends, it was *throwing water on a drowned mouse*, and "as good luck would have it, Sally's tongue didn't blister." Such being the case, he gave her a wide berth, and seldom made her an answer, for Jim was peaceably disposed, and his drunkenness was usually of the stupid kind, rather than the wild or stormy. It was only when a brace of squalling children took up a portion of Sally's time, and sickness came upon herself and them, so that she could no longer work as she had done, that Jim's aberrations assumed a savage form, and the demon of selfishness cleared his heart of human pity and natural affection.

The sight of Bessy that night was like a barbed arrow planted in Sally's wretched heart. It tore open again the bleeding wounds half healed by custom, and seared into callous indifference. It reminded her of what she once was, and what she might have been—of the good example and the good advice by which she never profited—of all she had lost, and of all she had sacrificed for the worthless wretch whose specious promises had lured her on to ruin. With her brain all on fire, she was tottering down the street, with the one confused aim of getting away from Bessy, when Jim, as we have seen, popped out unexpectedly from the shade of a projecting arch. To his harsh demand for money she gave a flat denial, accompanied by some epithet true enough in its application, but not very complimentary. That and his disappointment so exasperated Jim that he first applied his foot and gave her a kick

which almost threw her to the ground, then, before she recovered her balance, followed it up with a blow that would certainly have left its mark had it reached its destination. But the uplifted arm was caught by an M. P. passing at the moment, and the valorous Jim was hauled away to the lodging provided by the State for such contumacious lieges.

The elder child renewed its cries on seeing its father so roughly handled, but Sally, absorbed in her own misery, paid little attention to one or the other. Jim's brutal assault coming at such a moment, completely paralyzed her. She succeeded in reaching her dreary abode, and lay down on a bed of sickness from which she never rose. Some charitable neighbors representing her hard case to the proper authorities, obtained her admission to one of the hospitals, where a few days closed her earthly career. She died in a state of delirium, without priest or sacrament, and her two little children, deprived of their natural protectors, were, of course, adopted by those benevolent individuals who make merchandize of the souls of men.

It was not for years after that this sad *denouement* of Sally's fate came to the knowledge of Bessy Conway, and when it did, all that remained for her to do was to breathe a prayer for her soul, and drop a tear to her unhonored memory.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

BESSY was mistaken in supposing that Herbert had forgotten her. He never lost sight of her for any length of time, and often when she thought him far away and oblivious of her existence he was nearer than she imagined. Many a time he was dogging her steps when he did not dare to approach her, for, with all his effrontery to others, he never could get rid of a certain feeling of respect in the presence of Bessy. Ever since that unlucky day, as he called it, when he forgot himself so far as to overstep the line which he had hitherto marked out for himself in his intercourse with her, he had shrunk from encountering again the withering scorn of her glance, and the aching void thus left in his heart he had endeavored to fill up by the feverish excitement of the gaming-table and the uproarious mirth of the drunken carouse. He knew well that every step he took in the career of dissipation separated him just so much farther from Bessy. The thought was torture to him, and yet he made no effort to overcome the evil habits that were gathering strength from day to day. He hated himself, hated the life he was leading, for somewhere in his soul there were yearnings after something better; he hated the companions of his hollow and noisy pleasures; he hated the world and laughed to scorn the so-called virtues of its votaries; all his heart was seared and scathed save only the one green spot where Bessy Conway was enshrined. Her image, it is true, had waxed dimmer to his eyes as months passed into years and saw them still farther separated, but he

had never entirely forgotten her—the image was never wholly effaced.

Whether it was Ned's relationship to Bessy that kept him hovering about THE CASTLE nobody but himself could tell. Ned's faculties, never of the clearest, had become so obtuse that he could see no farther than his nose, as Paul used to say, and he had got a notion in his head that Henry Herbert was the best friend he had in the world. With the mulish obstinacy of a drunken man he rejected all counter evidence, and would hear nothing against Herbert whether it came from Ally, or Paul, or any one else. Of late, Ally had given up all hopes of ever seeing, his eyes opened with regard to Herbert, and was in the habit of saying: "Unless God does it, I can do no more—that fool of a man won't let me open my mouth to tell him the truth."

"Never mind, Mrs. Finigan!" Paul would say when she thus opened her mind to him, "God won't desert *you*, anyway, because you're doing all for the best."

"Ah! but, Paul dear! I'm waitin' a long time now, and you see yourself what a state that man has brought himself to. He's drunk most of his time, and he's neither fit for one thing or the other only sittin' there like a log o' wood, dosin' away his life-time, an' me tryin' so hard to keep on the business and make all ends meet. And worse than all that, Paul!"—and she fairly burst out crying—"I'm afeard it's a sudden death he'll get—sudden and unprovided both—for there's times and you'd think there wasn't a drop of blood in his body but what's up in his head. Many a time I see him as black as a nigger almost in the face with the fair dint of liquor. Och, Paul! Paul! wasn't it the devil himself—Lord pardon me!—that brought Herbert across us? I'm afeard he'll never quit that unfortunate fellow till he sees the last of him—he's the villain of all I ever met!"

"God help you, Mrs. Finigan, ma'am! it's you that knows nothing about it." Then lowering his voice he went on as if



to himself, "humph!—ay! it's about time—I see there's no chance of a change—maybe I was wrong not to do it before now——"

"Do what, Paul?"

"Oh! nothing at all, ma'am, only a little business I have up here on Thursday evening, God willing. You needn't say anything about it to Ned or any one—you understand?"

Oh! yes, Ally understood that part of it very well, and with her assurance that she would keep silence on the head of it, Paul strutted away, his brain filled to overflowing with "thick coming fancies" gradually assuming shape and form as plans and projects. Paul was a clear-headed man, and a long-headed man, too, and now his keen wits were all at work on a grand design to which he devoted as much thought as Raphael or Michael Angelo to one of their glorious conceptions.

Absorbed as he was in thought he passed Oliver street by, and taking his way down Catharine street turned into one of the quiet shady avenues of the old Seventh Ward, following which he soon reached Dr. Delany's house, where he stopped. His timid knock at the basement door was answered by Onny who, of course, was ever so glad to see him and cordially invited him in. No, no, Paul hadn't time then, he'd come around soon, but he only wanted to speak a word with Bessy. Laughing pleasantly and saying she hoped he'd remember his promise, Onny went in and sent out Bessy.

"Why, goodness me, Paul, is this yourself? won't you come in?" said Bessy all in a flurry.

"No, no, Bessy! I haven't a minute to stay. I'm a good while out, and the old woman will be wondering what keeps me. Do you know what brought me now?"

Of course Bessy did not know, so Paul told her. "I want you to be at Ned Finigan's a Thursday evening about seven o'clock. Can you do that?"

"To be sure I can, the mistress never refuses to let me out

whenever I want to go, for she knows it isn't often I ask her. I'll be there, please God. But what's going on now, Paul? Is anything wrong at Ned's?"

"'Deed and there is, then,—plenty wrong—but you'll know it soon enough. Say nothing of this to any one, even Onny. I'll be biddin' you good-bye, now, and mind I'll depend on you."

"You may, I'll not disappoint you."

"Dear me!" said Bessy to herself as she closed the door after him, "what has he got in his head now? If he isn't the queerest creature living!—sometimes I'm afraid of him, he looks so odd. But then he's good—every one knows that—well! I'd like to know what he's at now, for I see it's something past the common. I'm afraid it's about Ned—he *says* there's 'plenty wrong there'—ah! that's just it—God help poor Ally!"

Do as she would, however, she could not get rid of the impression that herself was somehow concerned in the business which Paul appeared to have on hands, and she felt restless and unhappy she knew not why. Her anxiety increased every moment and she looked forward to Thursday evening with a feverish impatience never felt before.

Thursday came at last, and it seemed to Bessy the longest day she had ever seen. But long and tedious as it was, it passed away, and the gathering shades warned her that the hour so eagerly expected was near at hand.

It was dark when she reached the Castle Inn, for the Autumn was already far advanced and the days were wearing short. It was a raw, cheerless evening, and as Bessy walked along Prince street after leaving the stage, she felt a chill creeping over her, and a sinking at her heart that left her hardly able to move a limb. She had never felt anything like the sensation that came over her, and she said within herself: "Lord save us! I often heard of people being bewitched—maybe it's what I got a blast of an evil eye. Christ and His Holy Mother preserve me!"

A low smothered laugh reached her ear at the moment, so near that she started and looked up. She was not far wrong in her supposition, fanciful as it seemed, for Henry Herbert was by her side, his eyes fixed on her with the strangest look—half fond, half mocking.

"My goodness, Master Henry! you frightened me!" she said almost unconsciously. His appearance and her own thoughts were so strangely connected, she could not tell how or why.

"Did I?" he said very softly. "Well! it's rather hard—very unfortunate, indeed, that I should frighten you. But then it is so long, so very long, since we met—yet even so, why should the sight of me alarm you?—now don't run away from me—don't, I beseech you! I am sober enough now, Bessy! so you needn't fear me!—fear me!" he repeated bitterly, as if to himself, "why should *she* ever fear me? I'd be mad, indeed, when I harmed *her*!—Bessy! I see you're trying to escape—now, will you just listen to me for one moment?"

"For God's sake, Master Henry! don't talk to me at all!" said Bessy in a low nervous tone. "Go away, I beg of you, for I don't want Ned's people to see you with me, and it's there I'm going now."

"So am I, too, Bessy! so where's the harm if we walk together?"

"It is a harm," said Bessy passionately, "and a great harm, too. I'll turn back, if you don't go on, and leave me alone."

"Well! I'll see you there, at all events," said Herbert, "so I'll do as you tell me. But mind, I must speak with you this night, so no more tricks, Bessy. If I miss seeing you at THE CASTLE, I'll go to-morrow to Dr. Delany's,—choose which you will."

"I'll see you at Ned's, then, sir," said Bessy hastily, "in presence of Mrs. Finigan."

"Ah, Bessy! Bessy!" said Herbert reproachfully, as he turned away, "when will you learn to trust me?"

"NEVER!" was the word that rose to Bessy's lips, but Herbert was gone, and the word was unsaid, at least unheard by him.

It might have been an hour later when Paul Brannigan marched up to the CASTLE INN with an air as defiant as if he meant to take the fortress by storm. He had with him a smart-looking young lad, with smooth intelligent features.

Ned was sitting half asleep in his arm-chair behind the bar, whilst Ally was dealing out the fire-water to the nimble little waiter who, in white jacket and apron, kept running to and fro, hither and thither, at the bid of all comers.

"What will you take, Mike?" said Paul to his young companion, as though that was the special object of his visit. "But sure I needn't ask, I know you take nothing stronger than lemonade. Mrs. Finigan, ma'am! will you let us have two glasses of the nicest lemonade you can make?" Having seated Mike, he went back and whispered to Ally:

"Did Bessy come yet?"

"Yes, yes, more than an hour ago. She's with my mother abroad in the little room."

"Very good, very good. And the other person?"

"Not come yet—husht! there he is now. Be off as fast as you can!"

It was Herbert, accompanied as usual by Dixon. Sending the latter in before him, Herbert in his turn asked Mrs. Finigan in a whisper if Bessy Conway had come.

"She did, Mister Herbert," said Ally quietly, "she's inside there," pointing to the place.

"Tell Mr. Dixon I'll be with him in a moment," said Herbert to the waiter, and he disappeared. His exclamation of angry astonishment was heard by those outside, when going in to where he thought Bessy was alone, he found Mrs. Murphy, whom he knew to be no friend of his.

"Bessy!" said he, "can I not speak half a dozen words with you without witnesses?"

"There's nothing you can want to say to me, Master Henry!" said Bessy calmly, "but Mrs. Murphy may hear. She's my friend and well-wisher."

"God he knows *that's* true," observed Bridget with a kind look.

"Even that does not entitle her to hear my private affairs," said Herbert.

"If they're so very private, Master Henry!" said Bessy, with her quiet smile, "I have no right to hear them either."

He looked at her a moment without speaking, then suddenly snatched her hand and drew her to the further end of the room. "Bessy!" said he lowering his voice and speaking with a sort of nervous trepidation that at once riveted her attention, "Bessy, I have just heard of my father's death —"

"My goodness! is it possible?" cried Bessy with strong emotion, "and me talking to you as I did, little thinking of the trouble that was on your mind! Indeed I'm sorry, Master Henry! very sorry!"

"So am not I," Herbert replied. "There was little love between us—he never treated me as a father ought, and, to tell the truth, I was only an indifferent son. I know not where the fault lay—I suppose we all had our share of it—but that is not the question now—what I want to say to you is this, Bessy Conway! my father's death has removed one obstacle to our marriage—at least to our going home married—it will make me more independent, too, and I ask you once more—for the last time, Bessy!—will you be my dear wife? will you share my fortunes?—mind I will never ask you again—so do not—oh! do not refuse me now!" He pressed the hand he held between both his own, and looked imploringly in her face, as utterly forgetful of Bridget's presence as if no such person were in existence.

Bessy was not so oblivious, however, and she forced herself to speak calmly though her heart and brain were throbbing.

"Lord bless me! Master Henry, what a time for you to talk of such things——"

"Answer me, Bessy!" he said with increasing vehemence, "will you or will you not accept my offer?"

"Master Henry!" said Bessy in a faint voice, "let go my hand—I want to sit down——"

Bridget hastened to bring her a chair, and seeing her pale and trembling, told Herbert sharply to go about his business and not be bothering the decent girl.

"Woman! be silent!" he said with a look and gesture so wild that it frightened Bridget resolute as she was. "Bessy!" said he then, bending over her as she sat with a face of passionate entreaty, "Bessy! my fate and yours depend on your answer—you may save me, body and soul, from ruin—you can make me what you will—but give me a mooring—do not cut the only link that holds me to virtue—do not send me adrift on this wide cold world—we will go home to Ireland—you will be a lady——"

"For the love of God say no more, Master Henry!" said Bessy making an effort to rise; "Mrs. Murphy! hadn't we better go?"

"Am I again refused?" said Herbert, his wrath beginning to boil over.

Bessy was moving away leaning on Bridget's arm, but she stopped and raised her tearful eyes to his with a look that went to his heart, it was so beseeching, so sorrowful.

"Bessy!" he said in a softened tone, "I cannot—will not believe you cruel—answer me, at least, one way or the other!"

"Master Henry!" said Bessy with as much composure as she could command, "before I could consent to what you ask, there's many things would have to be cleared up."

"What are they?" he joyfully exclaimed, catching eagerly at this shadow of hope.

Before Bessy could answer, Ally made her appearance to say that Mr. Dixon was angry at being kept so long waiting.

"I'll see you soon again," Herbert whispered as he passed Bessy. To his great surprise she and Mrs. Murphy followed him into the larger room accompanied by Ally, and all three coolly took their seats at a table where Paul was sitting with his young friend, their lemonade untasted before them. It so happened that at the moment there were no others in the room, and as Herbert took his seat opposite Dixon at a small table, he said with an unnatural attempt at gaiety:

"I say, Dixon! we had no idea coming in, that before we left we should have

'The sky of this life open o'er us,  
And heaven give a glimpse of its blue.

Now for 'the cup that is smiling before us,' or, at least, *will* smile—what will the ladies have?"

There was an emphasis on the word *ladies* that was quite perceptible, and Paul answered in precisely the same tone:

"The *ladies* are with us—we'll see to *them*."

"Ho! ho! old scarecrow!" said Herbert laughingly, as he went to the door to speak with Ned; "*you're* there, are you?"

"If your eyes are good, you needn't ask," retorted Paul quickly; "I hope you're not forgetting your crony abroad?"

"My crony! who do you call *my* crony?"

"Why Ned Finigan, to be sure, don't leave him out on our account, for there's nobody—*barrin' yourself*—has a greater wish for him than I have."

"You're a bitter old coon," said Herbert consciously as he left the room.

"Go yourself," whispered Ally, and Paul went accordingly.

In a few minutes he returned alone and, in answer to the inquiring looks of the woman, shook his head significantly, smiling all the time.

"He's on the hook," said he; "see what a fine take Mr. Herbert has."

"Come along, Ned," said Herbert again making his appearance, "come along in and sit down

'An' we'll toom the stoup to friendship's growth.'

Ahem!"—he looked exultingly at Paul.

"Ned!" said Ally raising her finger threateningly.

"Never mind him, Mrs. Finigan, ma'am!" said Paul cheerfully; "*we* have only lemonade, *they* have brandy, so that makes a difference. He scarce condescended to answer me when I asked him, and it the first time, too, but then he's so used to Mister Herbert now, that a body could hardly expect him to turn his back on *him*."

"What brings *you* in here?" said Ned gruffly to his wife.

"Have you nothing to do but sit up there cosherin'?"

"Why, I want to keep *you* company, Ned," the wife rejoined, "man and wife ought to be together, you know!"

"It's a pity we hadn't Luky Mulligan here," said Paul very composedly across the table to Mrs. Murphy.

"What do you say that for?" asked the shrewish matron bristling up.

"Why, I'm sure Mr. Herbert there would be glad to see him, for I know they're great friends entirely."

"I don't doubt it," said Bridget with a scathing look at Herbert, they say "*Birds of a feather always flock together*."

Every eye was turned to Paul, and Herbert made a mocking gesture at him, as though to say: "Do your worst—I defy you!"

"What do you mean by that?" said Ned, whose ear, fuddled as he was, caught the name of Luky Mulligan.

"He *means* to crack a joke," said Herbert, "but his jokes are rather bitter for most people's liking."

"What sort of a joke were *you* cracking, Mr. Herbert!" said Paul turning round on his chair to fix his eye on him, "the night you gave Luky Mulligan the money at the corner of Roosevelt and Chatham over two years ago?"



"An impudent fellow, dem my eyes!" ejaculated Dixon.

"Eh! what's that?" said Ned waking up a little. "You don't mean Mr. Herbert, do you?"

"It's just himself I do mean," said Paul; "ask Mr. Herbert—the best friend you have in the world—ahem! what he gave that money for——"

"If he's wise he won't, you miserable wretch! for I'd kick any man that asked me such a question."

"Well, I'm sorry to hear Mr. Herbert," said Ned hesitatingly, "that you had any knowledge of that ill-conditioned vagabond."

"Knowledge of him!" exclaimed Paul. "If it was only havin' knowledge of him, you'd never hear me say a word about it, for I know the pair of them were very thick at home in Ireland, and as Mrs. Murphy there says, its only natural for *birds of a feather to flock together*. But there's a little secret in it that I want you to hear before it goes any farther. As Mr. Herbert won't tell us himself, we'll find another that will. Mike! my man, I believe *you* can read us the riddle. Tell us what you heard passing that night between this gentleman and Luky Mulligan!"

"Ned Finigan!" said Herbert standing up, "I think this joke is going somewhat too far. I certainly didn't expect that you would allow me to be insulted in your house and in your presence."

"Well! it's not my wish, Mr. Herbert!" said Ned, much embarrassed, "nor neither is it my fault—it's this fool of a man that's doin' it all, you see—it's some of his pranks he's playin'."

"Go on, Mike!" said Paul.

"Come away from here, Dixon!" said Herbert, in a state of nervous excitement, "I shan't stay a moment longer."

Dixon stood up, but being curious to hear as well as another, he pretended to look for his hat though knowing very well where it was. Meanwhile Mike was telling what had passed

between the two worthies in regard to the marriage-money. He was interrupted by sundry exclamations of surprise and indignation.

"Mr. Herbert!" cried Ned, "Mr. Herbert do that!—Mr. Herbert that has done so much for us?"

"There's for you!" said Ally, "there's for you, Ned!—what do you think of that now?"

"Oh! the villain!—the murderin' villain!"—screamed Bridget starting to her feet and shaking her clenched fist at him, "the black drop's in him—he couldn't be good, an' the ould skin-flint of a father he had—he has done for *us*, as well as Ned! Oh! the curse of a heart-broken mother on you!"

"Mrs. Murphy dear! have patience!" said Bessy trying to make her sit down again, "I wouldn't speak bard of the old man now when he's dead—sit down, won't you? *he* feels bad enough you may be sure!"

There was not much appearance of it if he did, for he stood looking round on each speaker with a supercilious sneer curling his lip. At last he addressed Mike.

"And who may *you* be that have such good ears of your own?"

"My name is Mike Milligan, Mr. Herbert!" said the lad modestly, yet with an air of self-respect, "I was then a news-boy, vending the *Daily Herald*—and many a one I sold you, sir!—now I'm a clerk in a wholesale house in Pearl street, thanks to the teaching and good advice of my dear friend Paul Brannigan——"

"Well! Mr. Clerk in a wholesale house in Pearl street, I shall invest a small sum of money in a cow-hide some of these days for your special benefit——"

"I wouldn't if I were you," said Mike very drily, "better keep your money, sir, for something else—give it to some old woman to say a prayer for you."

"Very well, my lad! very well! I'll have my eye on *you*, depend on it."

Mike answered by a gesture indicating perfect indifference. The clamor of Bridget's scolding voice, and the various exclamations of the others, were little heeded by Ned. He was concentrating his thoughts for a grand attack on Herbert, but what with the anger and the quantity of liquor he had been imbibing, he could hardly make himself intelligible. He stood up and made an attempt to look very fierce, his eyes starting from their sockets, his limbs tottering under the weight of his bloated body, and his whole frame trembling.

"Mr. Herbert!" said he sputtering and stammering at every word, "Mr. Herbert! what did you do that for, eh? I took you—for a friend—(hiccup) I see I was wrong—it was Lucky Mulligan's friend you were—sailing under false colors—I thought you were a gentleman, Mr. Herbert!—but I tell you plainly—you're no such thing—you're a scoundrel, sir!—get out of my house!"

"Certainly, Mr. Finigan, certainly!" said Herbert with comic gravity, "much obliged to you, Mr. Finigan!"

"Very ungrateful, 'pon honor!" ejaculated Dixon. "That's your thanks, Herbert, for all the money you spent here!"

"And all the hours I endured *his* company," pointing contemptuously to Ned, "all the nonsense I heroically listened to—well! no matter, Dixon! In the language of Scripture I have my reward."

"What's that?" said Ned with a sudden flash of animation.

"REVENGE!" cried Herbert sternly, "REVENGE!" and he looked around with the smile of an exulting demon, his face pale with the intensity of passion, as he pointed to the ungainly figure of the landlord.

"Blessed Mother!" murmured Bessy Conway pale as death; without heeding her Herbert went on, Paul motioning to the others to keep silent.

"Neither man nor woman ever injured me with impunity. Look at Ned Finigan now and think what he was the day he made a show of me before the passengers of the *Garrick*."

Ha! ha! He bears my mark on every feature and on every limb! I made him what he is—I Henry Herbert—alas! poor fool! If I didn't hate you as I hate the devil I could pity you for the wretched thing you are—I'll leave you now to your own pleasant thoughts—as for you,” turning to Paul with a dark scowl of hatred, “as for *you*—your time will come!”

“I defy you!” said Paul calmly and firmly, “you can do me no harm while I walk in the way of God's commandments! If that unfortunate man had kept from the liquor and avoided your company you couldn't have injured him either. The Lord look to him this day!”

“You may well say that, Paul!” said Ned, falling helplessly into his seat, and looking all the misery that his tongue could not express; “I'm done, Paul! I'm done!—there's not so poor a creature on God's earth!—sure enough he has his revenge!—but oh! what did I do to him, compared with what he has done to me! I don't blame him, though, so much as I blame myself—I know I was doin' wrong—poor Ally and yourself and Peery and Bridget—everybody that wished me well told it to me many a time—but I wouldn't hear to them—now—now—*now*—it's too late—the devil has his grip on me—oh! this business—this business.”

“Nonsense, man!” said Dixon half jest, whole earnest, “don't blame the business—you have made money at it—you're a rich man—demme! you're very ungrateful!”

“Rich!” murmured Ned; “rich! ay, rich indeed! What's riches to me now? I'd give all I'm worth in the world to be——”

“*Able to carry me up the companion ladder!*” put in Herbert with his mocking laugh.

“Take him away!” said Ned, “take him out of my sight, or I'll be tempted to raise my hand to him, and if I do I'll kill him—as sure as God's in heaven I will!”

Bridget and Ally were loud in their threats, predicting for Herbert all sorts of woes temporal and eternal. Bessy, over-

whelmed with grief not unmingled with shame, made an effort to steal away unnoticed, but Paul caught her hand and drew her back to her seat. His next move was rather singular and startled every one present. He walked deliberately and locked first one door then the other.

"Now," said he, "I'm going to tell a story, and I don't want to be disturbed, you see! Sit down, Mr. Herbert and Mr. Dixon, sit down and make yourselves comfortable. I used to be a great hand at telling stories, and maybe if I could think of a good one now, it would put you all in better humor."

One looked and another looked. They could hardly believe their ears, and so strange was the proposition, so odd the manner in which it was made, that Herbert and Dixon laughed heartily, declaring that the dwarf had lost his senses. Down they both sat, and Herbert rapped the table with his knuckles!

"The story by all means!—His lordship's story!" Paul grinned and nodded and cleared his throat.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Just as Paul was about to commence his story the waiter knocked at the door to say that Tom Cassidy and old Mrs. Sheehan were outside and insisted on being let in with the rest.

"Is there anybody else?" asked Paul through the key-hole.

"Nobody only Teague Moriarty from near Ardfinnan."

"They're all welcome," said Paul applying the key to the lock.

"Bad manners to you, Paul!" said Cassidy as they entered, "is it makin' masons you are, or what, that you lock the door on yourselves?"

"Ask us no questions and we'll tell you no lies," said Paul curtly; "sit down all of you—Mrs Sheehan, ma'am, here's Bessy and Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Finigan—come in here to the corner, there's room for you. Now, Mr. Herbert! I know you're a good warrant to treat people—here's a nice little company of us now, most all from your own place at home—what are you goin' to do for us? a *gentleman* like you ought to have an open hand."

The cutting irony of these remarks made Herbert wince. "That back of yours stands you in good stead, if it weren't for it you should have your answer pretty quick."

"Paul!" said Ned in a voice quivering with anger, "I'll not stay here if *he's* in the room."

"'Deed an' you will, then, Ned!" said Paul, "to oblige me

you'll do it, an' keep as quiet as a mouse now for I'm going to begin my story."

"Botheration to you!" muttered Ned between his teeth, "what do I care for your stories?"

"I believe the confounded fellow takes us all for fools!" said Herbert to his friend in a stage whisper. "Shall we stay, think you?"

"Demme! we can't *help* staying," said Dixon pointing to the door now again fast. He felt rather curious to hear the story told under such singular circumstances, but he did not say so.

"Well! if we must, we must," said Herbert with a careless smile, and leaning back in his chair he folded his arms, and looked round with an air, half mocking, half contemptuous, carefully avoiding, however, the particular spot where Bessy sat silent and as it seemed abstracted.

"Well now, Dixon!" said Herbert half turning to his friend, "I rather think we're a precious pair of fools, sitting here waiting for an old crazy-pate to spin his yarn!"

"I b'lieve its a ghost-story I'll tell you," said Paul fixing his eyes on the ceiling as though there were some cabalistic signs there to aid his memory. Pre-occupied and anxious as most of his auditors were, and little "i the vein" for hearing stories, there was something in Paul's manner that riveted their attention, and they listened, they knew not why.

"It happened in a place that most of you know well," resumed Paul, "that's the old abbey-church of Ardfinnan."

Why, to be sure, every one knew it, and every one's attention was doubly excited. Even Ned roused himself like a dog shaking off a drowsy fit.

"But sure we all heard it before," said Teague Moriarty, "if it's *that* you're goin' to tell us."

"Will you just have a little manners, Teague, and don't interrupt me? I know you all heard part of the story, but that's the very reason that you ought to hear more."

"Confound you!" said Herbert angrily, "do you think we can sit here listening to your nonsensical rigmaroles?"

"Take it easy, Mr. Herbert, take it easy!" said Paul drily, "many an hour you spent here when there was ne'er a story to hear—your time isn't worth any more now than it was then. Well! you all remember, I'm sure, the terror that was over the whole country for miles round in regard to the noise that used to be heard in the lonesome place where there wasn't a living soul only the old monks that were in their graves hundreds of years."

"Ha! ha! that's good, isn't it?" said Herbert to Dixon with a strange unnatural laugh. "Not a living soul but the dead old monks, eh?"

Paul took no notice but went on. "Strange noises were heard and strange sights were seen about the abbey at the dead hour of night when the world was sleeping. You all remember the talk that was about it, and the stories that were told, fit to make the hair of one's head stand on end."

"Remember it!" cried Teague Moriarty, "why, I got a fright myself there, one night that me and Phil Byrne were coming home from a dance, and as it was late we took a near-cut through the fields, that brought us in sight of the ould Abbey."

"What did you see?" asked Herbert, much amused.

"I saw—Christ between us and harm!—I saw a blaze of light shinin' out from the windows that you'd think there was a grand illumination in it."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho! d'ye hear that, Dixon?" and Herbert laughed vociferously. "A blaze of light through the windows!—why, man, there hasn't been a window there for ages."

"No matter, Mr. Herbert! it's all the same," said Paul, "we know what Teague means, and I'm sure he's telling the truth, for I often saw the light myself."

"Are you in earnest?"



"Indeed I am, Mr. Herbert!—and that's so sure that I got a talking about it to Billy Potts, the sexton of Ardfinnan Church—you all know *him*—and we made it up that we'd go some night and watch together at St. Finian's Abbey."

Another wild burst of laughter from Herbert startled the eager listeners. "Ho! ho! ho! two bumps with their heads together, plotting against the ghosts!—down among the dead men!—ha! ha! ha!"

"And did you go?" said Ally with breathless eagerness, heeding only Paul.

"Go!" cried Herbert again, "go! not they, indeed! I'd like to see the living man that would keep watch by night in St. Finian's Church."

"You may see him now, then," said Paul, coolly, "for I'm the man that did it, myself and Billy Potts!"

"Christ save us!"—"Lord bless us!" "An' what did you see, Paul! what did you see, astore?" This last was from Dolly Sheehan.

"Did you see the black dog?" asked another.

Paul paid little attention to the eager exclamations of those around him—the weird spirit was upon him—he was brooding over his own strange fancies, and conjuring up bodiless shapes from the grave of vanished years. He sat with his small eyes fixed on vacancy yet gradually kindling with inward fire, his large head bent forward, and his hands resting on his knees. His thin pale lips were working and twitching with a tremulous motion yet they gave forth no sound. Every eye was fixed on him but no one ventured to speak. Even Herbert forgot his levity, and sat silent and attentive. He was pale, too, and appeared ill at ease, watching Paul's countenance most intently.

"What did I see?" said Paul at length raising his head and speaking very slowly, "I saw what I didn't expect to see. It was a dark dull night in the harvest-time that Billy and myself went up to the Abbey, and a lonesome tramp we had of

it for we waited till the people were all at rest, and you know even in daylight what a place it is on account of the trees meetin' overhead and the big black rocks that look as if they were ready to fall a-top of you. Myself felt a little daunted when we got to the old Abbey and seen it standin' up between us and the sky, and indeed it was only the *bulk* of it we could see through the thick darkness. Billy trudged along as contented as if he was walkin' down the street and the blessed sun shinin' over him. Billy never knew what fear was. He was so used to diggin' down among the dead and handlin' their white bones that he wasn't a bit afeard of them, and I didn't care to let him know that *I* was either.

"Well! when we got to the Abbey there wasn't a thing to be seen barrin' the great black walls and the trees about them shaking in the wind, for it was blowin' a little at the time. 'God guard us, Billy!' says I, 'isn't it a lonesome place this?' 'It's a quiet place,' says Billy back again, 'a brave quiet place—I see no sign of *them* yet—' who,' says I, 'why the spe-rits,' says Billy, 'maybe they'll not stir out the night, it's so dark and dismal.' Billy laughed but *I* didn't laugh, for it made the hair stand on my head to hear him talkin' that way at such a time and in such a place. 'Where are we goin' for shelter, Billy?' says I to him, 'we can't stay here long unless we get under cover, for I'm thinkin' the weather is goin' to change.' 'We'll see,' says Billy, 'maybe we wouldn't *have* to stay long, but, at any rate, I think I know a place where we can have a view of the inside, and be in shelter, too. When I was a little fellow I spent many an hour among these ruins, and even of late years I often drop in of a Sunday to see the old place and sit awhile among the quiet dead. I have a great wish for the dead, Paul! espaiially the monks that I know were so good and died so happy, and I often spend awhile pickin' the rubbish and the weeds from about their tombstones, an' when I meet any bones lyin' about I gather them up and pile them all together for fear some of them

might belong to the monks or the abbots or some of them holy people. If it was daylight, Paul! I could show them to you—a nice little pile right in the middle of the chancel where the altar used to stand.' 'I'm thankful to you, Billy!' says I back to him, 'but I'd as soon see anything else as a heap of dead men's bones.'"

"I'll break *your* bones," said Herbert savagely, "if you don't either get on with your story or open the door and let us out!"

"Have patience, Mr. Herbert," said Paul drily; "I'm getting on finely, sir! where was I?—oh I know, I was at the bones—well! Billy laughed at myself when I said that, but, anyhow, we walked round the Church till we came to the place where it and the Abbey joined, and Billy took me along a narrow passage—in the wall I think it was—and up a little flight of stone steps—he had to hold me by the arm all the way, myself not knowin' where it was safe to put my foot—at last he pushed me down and I found myself sittin' squat on a stone bench, and dark as the night was, I could see that there was an opening before us like a window. 'Now,' says Billy 'if there's anything to be seen here the night, *we'll* see it, Paul! sit there now, an' if it rained till mornin' we wouldn't get a drop.'"

"What a pair of old fools you were to be sure!" interrupted Herbert with one of his wild unseasonable bursts of laughter "I suppose it was up in the belfry you were, among the crows!"

"No, it wasn't," said Paul nodding significantly at him; "it was one side of the choir."

"Ha!"

Paul nodded again and glanced furtively at Herbert, then went on: "The night was dark, as I told you before, and the wind, though not very high at first, made a dismal sound amongst the vaults and passages of the old building. The rooks were cawing mournfully amongst the ivy on the castle

towers close by, and the bats were flying round us where we sat, flapping their wings in our very faces. I didn't like the place a bit, and many a time I wished myself in my little room in the village below. Between the cold and the fear that was on me, I was shivering from head to foot, and still I didn't care to tell Billy how I felt.

"'I think we're only losin' our time sittin' here,' says I at last; 'there won't anything show itself the night just because we're here.'

"'Flush!' says Billy in a whisper, 'I hear something.'

"'It's the wind,' says I; 'No, it isn't,' says he—'listen!'

"We both sat a few moments longer keeping in our breath and straining our eyes to see through the darkness. I did hear a noise sure enough, and the cold sweat was tricklin' down my face, and every hair on my head was up of an end. 'They're comin',' whispered Billy, and his voice sounded like one from the dead and made me shiver all over. There came a gust of wind sweeping down the aisle, and a flash of lightning, as I thought, that filled the whole Church. It wasn't lightning, though—

"'The Lord in heaven save us! what's that?' says I, 'that light isn't from the sky?'

"'It's from the pit,' says Billy. 'Look there!' and I looked down where the light seemed to come from, and what do you think I saw?"

"'What! what, Paul?' said Ned all aghast like the rest.

"'Perhaps the perturbed spirit of Jerry Faby, the butcher?'" suggested Herbert wickedly.

"'The light was right under us,' went on Paul, "and a blue brimstone light it seemed, too."

"'Brimstone your grandmother! rise Herbert.

"'And figures were there in the shape of men, every one with a pointed hood on his head and a loose coat belted in about him like what the monks used to wear. They were grinnin' and laughin' at one another and jabberin' like monkeys,

and I thought the very life would leave me when I saw them gatherin' round the pile of bones. 'Christ save us! what are they goin' to do?' says I to Billy, under my breath. 'Husht!' says he, 'you'll soon see that. Let them be what they may, they have business on hands.'"

Paul stopped, and taking out his little red handkerchief wiped the perspiration from his brow. "Oh! Lord!" said he, as if to himself, "can I ever forget what I suffered at that moment! I thought the very blood in my veins turned into ice when I saw one of them take out a pack of cards and throw them on the dead men's bones, and the shout of a laugh they all gave, then, echoed through the whole buildin'. With that the wind rose to a hurricane, and the old walls shook again with every gust, and the thunder crashed right over our heads, and the blue lightning flashed on every side, and you'd think hell itself was let loose on the minute. Billy and me crept closer together, for fear was in our hearts, but the things below laughed louder and louder, and rattled the dice in hellish glee, and dealt the cards and began to play."

Cries of terror were heard on every side when Paul reached this stage of his story. A flash of sudden intelligence shot like electricity through the room. Teague Moriarty jumped from his seat and laid his hand on Paul's shoulder.

"Maybe they weren't dead at all?" and bending forward he peered anxiously into the dwarf's face.

"There were dark doings goin' on about the same time," said Bridget Murphy. "Our man could tell you that if he was here." She looked exultingly at Herbert. But Herbert heeded her not, his eyes were fixed on Paul.

"They were a ghastly set," said the hunchback with a shudder.

"They were ghastly in life, I should think," put in Herbert.

"The strangest thing of all is," said Paul, "that the faces weren't dead faces—you'd swear they were all living men, and they talked as natural as life."

"I should like to have heard them," said Herbert with an air of incredulity; "I dare say you were nodding asleep and dreamed all that. Could you favor us with a little of the conversation?"

The ironical smile on Herbert's lip disappeared before the keen scrutinizing glance which Paul turned on him. "I can," said he with startling abruptness, "I *can* favor you, Mr. Herbert! The one that dealt the cards—he sat right fornenst me, by the same token—laughed as he flung them to one and another, and says he: 'Now for the cash.'"

"Ha! what more?"

"And with that he threw down a bright gold piece—on the crown of a hat, Mr. Herbert! set right on the bones, and says he, laughing louder than ever, 'If the old fellow at home saw that now, he'd have all the police in Ardfinnan after us to hunt up his gold—but I'm bound to win it back this night, or I'll bid good-bye to the Abbey!'"

"Ha! ha! ha! a likely story!" sneered Herbert. "A pretty fellow for a monk!"

"'I'm about tired of the joke,' said the same speaker," Paul went on. "'Confound you for a coward!' said another, 'there's no spunk in you.'"

"It's a lie," cried Herbert starting to his feet, his eyes flashing fire; "it's a lie."

"What's a lie, sir?" asked Paul drily. Every eye was instantly turned on Herbert who, sensible of his error, threw himself again into his chair and forced a ghastly smile.

"Excuse me," he said in a husky voice, "I meant to say that your story is altogether improbable—a regular Munchausen affair—eh, Dixon?"

Dixon only nodded, he was deeply interested in the story, and his eyes were riveted on Paul. There was a sort of half smile, however, playing about his moustached lip that Herbert did not like.

"Go on, Paul! go on!" said Ned, "I hear people in the other room."

"Yes!" said Ally, "it's time we weren't here—well, Paul?"

"The others didn't speak much," said Paul, "but even if they had, we couldn't have heard what they said, for the wind rose higher and higher as the night wore on—still we could hear a word now and then coming deep and hoarse to us from below. After a little they were all so intent on their cards and their dice and the glittering gold before them that their very eyes were starting from their heads, and it seemed as if they neither heard the storm nor anything else, though at times you'd think the whole earth would be blown to pieces, and the last day was at hand. 'Well!' says I to Billy, 'what are they at all?' 'They're not ghosts, anyhow,' says Billy, 'that's plain enough—don't you know who they are?' Till that minute I did not, for the fear that was over me kept me from looking into their faces. When I began to think that they were beings of flesh and blood like myself I did look at them, and sure enough I knew them—aye! every one—they were living men, then, but they're dead men now—all except one."

"I knew it," cried Teague, clapping his hands, "didn't I hear of the curse of God crew that used to drink and booze, and play cards on the tombstones\* in the Abbey. The police got on their trail at last."

"Why didn't they take them?" said Herbert with his cadaverous smile. "And why didn't the whole country hear of these wonderful doings?"

Paul answered quickly: "Because, Mr. Herbert! the gamblers had plenty of money and greased the policemen's hands so well that they couldn't hold them. For the same reason it was hushed up and kept from the people's ears."

"Not so well but they got an inkling† of it," said Teague; "wasn't the whole country in a buzz about it, though nobody

\* This is a fact which some of our readers may recognize, but not as having occurred in Ardinnan. The real scene of the sacrilege was far away from Tipperary.

† A hint, or rather an idea

knew exactly what it was, and no one would venture, either, to go and find it out. If it hadn't been for Paul here and his comrade, Billy Potts, Lord knows how long the villains might have been at it, for I don't think there were two other men in the country that would do what *they* did."

"We are to suppose, then," said Herbert addressing Paul with a darkening brow, "that it was you and Humpy Billy that gave information to the police. Truly the community at large was much beholden to you! Allow me to thank you, Mr. Paul Brannigan! on behalf of all concerned. As for your story it does honor to your head if not to your heart—it is really a wonderful effort of your imagination!"

The scathing irony, the ineffable contempt with which these words were uttered would have annihilated many others, and were probably meant to annihilate Paul, but Paul was not the man to quail before mortal eye, and he stood the fire of Herbert's lightning glance without moving a muscle and looked him in the face with a cold searching eye.

"If I understand you right, Mr. Herbert," said he, "you mean that I invented the whole story? Do you or do you not?"

"How could I accuse you of such a thing?" said Herbert, still in the same biting tone, "supported as you are, too, by the testimony of—what's his name there?"

"Oh! be easy now, Mr. Herbert," said Teague, with a knowing wink; "that's a mighty long name you're puttin' on me."

Herbert muttered something between his teeth, in which the word "rascal" was alone distinguishable. Teague was angry enough to say anything, but Ally made a sign to him to keep quiet, pointing at the same time to Paul.

The hunchback had never taken his eye from Herbert's face, and the bold brow of the latter began to pale beneath that stern glance.

"Take him softly!" whispered Dixon, "he has you on the hip!"



"Hang him! he's only joking," said Herbert half aloud, "one can hardly tell when he's in jest or when in earnest."

"Come over here, Bessy Conway!" said Paul, without turning his head. Herbert started as if an adder had stung him, and when the girl took her place at Paul's side with a face like that of a sheeted corpse, a livid hue overspread his features, and he trembled in every limb.

"Bessy Conway!" said Paul with thrilling solemnity of look and tone, "see there! that face is anybody's fancy, isn't it? Well! I have seen it worse than that—ay! when you'd think the devil himself was lookin' through the eyes at you."

"Villain!" hissed Herbert through his closed teeth. "Liar!"

"I am no liar," said Paul, with increasing solemnity, "the Lord who will judge us both, knows that I speak the truth when I tell you, Bessy Conway! and all you who hear me!"

"What would you say?" cried Herbert, with sudden fury, and he made a spring at Paul to catch him by the neck. The stalwart arm of Teague Moriarty drove him to the wall, and there held him.

"That there he stands," went on Paul, pointing slowly with his finger, "who dealt the cards on that awful night in that awful place, and threw his dice on the dead men's bones in the consecrated walls of Ardfinnan Abbey!"

"Ha!" laughed Dixon, jumping from his seat with a wild laugh, "I knew it!—I knew it was he! I'm blowed if that wa'n't a rum idea!"

"You'd best keep a close mouth, Dixon," said Herbert, with a threatening gesture. "Braying asses are apt to get beaten."

"Let us out, Paul," said Mrs. Murphy, making for the door, and drawing Ally after her; "let us out for God's sake. It's not lucky nor safe to be where he is! Oh, oh! oh! who'd think there was such wickedness in the world? Come along, I tell you, Ally, never mind Ned."

"Oh! indeed its proud of himself the same Ned may be," responded Ally.

So saying, the two made their exit, without casting even one look at Herbert so great was their horror of his crime. Both of them had forgotten Bessy, and it seemed that Bessy had forgotten herself, for she stood like a thing petrified, her eyes fixed and vacant, her face as colorless as marble. Paul spoke to her in the softest tone he could command, but the vacant eye moved not. Ned Finigan anxiously approached, and took hold of her hand, and asked didn't she want to go home—"it's gettin' late, you know, Bessy; I think you must be forgettin' the time it is." Still no answer.

"What'll we do with her?" said Ned to Paul. "By the laws she frightens me, so she does."

Herbert, confounded and overwhelmed, knew not what side to look. A thousand different emotions passed like shadows over his face. His mind was a chaos in which feelings and passions were all working together, fermenting, as it were, for some violent explosion. Absorbed as he was he heard what was passing, and turning his eyes for the first time to where Bessy stood, his heart was melted at the sight. In an instant he was at her side, and seizing her cold, passive hand, he said in a choking voice:

"Bessy! I know I am an outcast—I acknowledge all—and more than all they have told—but will you desert me, too?"

At the sound of his voice, the blood rushed to Bessy's face, suffusing cheek, and brow, and lip—her eyes lit up with sudden fire, and she snatched away the hand Herbert held, then motioned him away, averting her head at the same time.

"God forgive you, Mr. Herbert! you're a great sinner—oh! but I'm sorry for you!—but never, never, *never* speak to me again—never, never, *never*! Oh, dear Lord! what the devil can make mendo! Come, Ned!—he has done for you anyhow!"

"Well, I forgive him," said Ned, "if God forgives him. I think his conscience will be punishment enough for him."

"Now I'm lost indeed!" said Herbert as they left the room, and he struck his forehead violently with his hand. Paul lingered a moment and seeing that he took no notice of him, went over and laid his hand on his arm.

"Mr. Herbert!" said he, "don't blame *me*! blame yourself!"

"I'll never forgive you in this world or the next!" cried Herbert vehemently, and so saying, he rushed from the room and from the house, repeating to himself: "*Only one alive—only one!*"

## CHAPTER XIX.

WE will now leave Bessy Conway for awhile, and return to the old homestead she left behind

"On that bright spring morning long ago"

when she went to seek her fortune in America. Full seven years had passed away since Bessy left her father's cottage, and eventful as those years had been to her they were not less so to "the old folks at home."

"The summer sun was sinking  
With a mild light calm and mellow,"

and its slanting rays rested on the straw-thatched roof of Denis Conway, but there was no beauty in the picture, for the look of comfort and neatness that belonged to the place in former days was gone, and had left scarce a trace behind. The thatch so trim and smooth in those by-gone days was broken in many places, and covered with patches of moss, whilst chicken-weed and darnel flaunted their unwelcome verdure on the gable-tops. The white walls beneath were discolored and stripped here and there of the "pebble-dash" that had covered them all so neatly. The small windows, too, were disfigured with sundry pieces of board nailed on as substitutes for broken panes, and altogether the house had a desolate, neglected look in painful contrast with its former appearance. The haggard was empty, and so was the byer—the horse was gone from the stable, and even the sty had lost its tenants—the overgrown sow was no longer there with her squeaking

brood, nor the well-cared bacon pigs, which, in other days, furnished so important a share of the winter's store for the family. The fowl were gone from the barn-door, for no grain was there to gather them round it. The discordant chorus of the farm-yard was no longer heard; the very hum of the bees in the adjacent garden had ceased, and silence sat brooding over Denis Conway's cottage. Decay, too, was there, and, beneath its withering touch, all things were hastening to ruin.

This was the aspect of affairs without, and within it was nothing better. The same look of desolation was everywhere visible, but its saddest imprint was on the people. Famine and disease had found their way into that happy household, and misery sat on the threshold. The aged father and mother sat opposite each other in their old straw chairs, by the dull, flickering fire, watching with distended eyes the unsavory mess which Nancy was making for the family supper, consisting of water and nettles, with a handful or so of oatmeal. Nancy herself as she bent over the pot was a living picture of hunger, and the low, suppressed moans which came at irregular intervals from a straw "shake-down" in the corner indicated the presence of one who suffered bodily pain. It was Ellen, the bright-eyed, dark-haired fairy, whose laugh used to ring the loudest, whose foot spring the lightest in days not long gone by. But the terrible fangs of hunger had fastened on her vitals, and disease was wearing her young life away.

"Nancy dear!" said the mother, "go and see what Ellen wants. I think she's speakin'."

"What is it, astore?" said the elder sister bending over the straw pallet.

"Something to eat," murmured Ellen, only half conscious. "I'm hungry."

"You'll have it in a minute, darlin', in one minute," and Nancy hastened back to her miserable cooking, and squatted

down on the hearth to fan the expiring embers into something like a blaze.

The tears ran down the mother's face, and she clasped her hands and looked up to heaven in silent anguish.

"Don't grieve, Bridget, don't grieve, achorra!" said her husband; "God is good, you know, and He'll never desert us."

"Well, father! we're far enough gone now," said Nancy in a faint, dejected voice.

"Never mind, dear, never mind!" still said Denis; "it's only tryin' us He is—He'll change His hand with us when He sees fit. Have you the broth ready for Ellen, Nancy?—God help us! it's poor stuff for a sick weakly stomach!—well! the Lord be praised, anyhow!"

Ellen was raised on her sister's arm, and swallowed with avidity some spoonfuls of the pottage, then looked up in Nancy's face and whispered: "Have you enough for all?"

"Plenty, machree, plenty!—don't be afeard! there's a potful of it!" Ellen's face lighted, and she gulped down some spoonfuls more, then made a sign that she had enough, and sank heavily back on her pillow.

"How do you find yourself after that sleep, Ellen!" said her mother with assumed composure.

"Was I asleep, mother? I didn't know," muttered the patient sufferer as she turned her heavy eyes first on one parent then on the other with a look of unutterable fondness; "Well! I think I'm better—I'm no worse, anyhow!"

"Thank God, dear! thank God for that!" said the father with pious fervor.

"Did the boys come back from Cashel?" Ellen asked.

"Not yet—we're expectin' them every minute," said Nancy, "and then you'll have a cup of tea, Ellen darlin', and some white bread, too!"

Ellen looked up eagerly in her sister's face, and a faint flush suffused her wasted cheek, it faded as quickly as it came, and the tears gushed to her eyes. "I don't want tea

or bread, Nancy!—I know it's for me you get them, and I'd rather you'd buy meal with the money."

"Husht, Ellen! husht!" said her mother, "don't be talkin' so much!"

"Make your mind easy," whispered Nancy, "we're not so far run as you think." Ellen shook her head and smiled sadly, then closed her eyes and appeared to sleep.

A little while after the young men came in. They placed their spades and shovels behind the door and came forward with as cheerful an aspect as they could assume, one of them handing a small bag to Nancy. The first glance of each was at the pot on the fire, and Nancy hastened to dish up the wretched substitute for a supper. The father and mother looked at each other and glanced with sorrowful meaning at the sunken cheeks and hollow eyes of their sons. It was clear that each one avoided speaking first. At last the father took courage.

"Well, boys! did you get any work?"

"Only half a day each, father!" said the elder brother, whose haggard, care-worn face was more like that of middle-age than the summer-time of life. "As *we* were brothers, they wouldn't give us any more than a day's work between us, we only worked from twelve o'clock."

"So you weren't able to get the things for Ellen," said the mother faintly.

"Not much, mother," the son replied with a heavy sigh, "the two shillings we got had to go for meal, for we knew there was none in the house, but as God would have it, a gentleman that saw us standin' there idle gave Tommy a six-penny piece for holdin' his horse, an' we got the worth of *that* of tea and sugar." He filled up so full that he was almost choking and could not speak another word. His brother, of somewhat a lighter spirit though equally sick at heart, undertook to finish the sentence, "and there was a penny over for which we bought bread for Ellen. Wasn't that fine dealin', mother?"

'Wisha, God help you, poor boys!' said the mother tenderly. "It's a pity you'd ever want money, for its yourselves that hadn't your hearts in it when you had it. Och! och! but they're the awful times these!"

"Well! it's one comfort," said the younger son with a poor attempt at gaiety, "it's one comfort that we're no worse than our neighbors. I saw Denny Ryan of the Hill there awhile ago carryin' home a stone of Indian meal on his back—and more by token he looked as if he was hardly able to stand with the dint of hunger!"

"Poor man! God help him!" said Denis compassionately, "him that had full and plenty of everything such a short time ago. It's little he'd think of giving more than that to a beggar goin' the road!"

"An' Jack Hagerty's wife an' two children are down with the sickness," said Tommy.

"Lord bless us and save us! what's comin' on the people, at all?" said Mrs. Conway in a desponding tone; "there's nothing for any of us, I'm afeard, but death and starvation! Och! Denis dear, isn't that girl of ours cruel and hard-hearted not to answer any of our letters?"

"You may say that, mother!" said Tommy in a tone of indignation; "she was very good at offering us money when we didn't want it, but when the bad times came on us and the potatoes failed, and the cattle had to go, an' everything we had, then when we wrote to let her know how matters stood, she could give us the cold shoulder and wouldn't even write us a scroll. That's the way with the world—when you're down, down *with* you!"

The young man fixed his eyes moodily on the dull smouldering fire, and sat silent and abstracted with his brows knit together and a bitter smile curling his lip.

"Well now," said the ever-hoping father, "I think you're all too hard on Bessy: there's something tellin' me that it isn't her fault—maybe she never got the letters."

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"Nonsense, Denis," said his wife sharply, "do you think the whole three went astray?—and sure if we didn't send o'er a one, she oughtn't to neglect us that way. Don't be tryin' to make excuses, now, Denis! I tell you there's no excuse for her."

"What are we goin' to do for that rent?" said Tommy, suddenly starting from his reverie, "you're forgettin' Mrs. Herbert altogether, an' you know what the bailiff said the last time he came."

"Know it?" said his father, "do you think we could forget it? But never mind, children, never mind! God is good, and even if that tyrant of a woman did put us out, He'd provide us with a shelter! Boys! you forgot to ask how Ellen was!" This was evidently meant to divert their thoughts from a topic which the old man would rather avoid at that particular moment, and the rest, ever obedient to his wishes, turned their attention on Ellen who was just waking up, or at least pretending to do so, for she had not been asleep.

Truly that was a dismal time in Denis Conway's cottage, and in many a cottage through the length and breadth of Ireland. It was the terrible year of the Famine, as the reader will have guessed, and the ruin which had been progressing rapidly during the previous years of dearth and commercial depression, and the failure of crops, had at length reduced the small farmers of the country, and amongst the rest Denis Conway and his family, to the pitiful state in which we have seen them. What money Denis had had was long since gone, no corn or wheat was ripening in his fields, for in the spring-time he had not the means to purchase seed, the stock could not live without eating, and one after another every hoof was taken to the fair and sold. Milk and butter, of course, went with them, and what was worse than all, the money which they brought—it was little compared with what it would have been at another time—had most of it to go to satisfy the clamorous demands of Mrs. Herbert's bailiffs. So from bad to worse things went on, till everything was wanting in the once-plentiful household,

everything except the grace of God and His holy peace. That was still there in as great abundance as ever, and faith and hope, though at times, perhaps, dimmed by the heavy clouds of suffering and privation, were never wholly obscured. The old man himself never allowed distrust or fear to enter his mind: no patriarch of old ever trusted more firmly in the Lord Almighty, and the darker the clouds that gathered around him the more steadily he fixed his eyes on the light that glimmered afar in the firmament. It was sad to see the failing old man wandering in the morning or evening twilight around his fallow fields where in other years the golden grain would, at that season, wave luxuriant, ready for the sickle, and the rugged leaves of the potato-stalk covering whole acres with their dark green hue of promise. Now the tall rag-weed nodded in the summer breeze, the dock-weed spread its broad leaves on the arid soil, and the fiery nettle grew and flourished where a weed dared not rear its head before, to dispute possession with the carefully-tended grain-stalk. As Denis noted all this, and thought how many other farms in that fertile district were like unto his own, he would sit down on a broken stile, or one of those huge boulders—geological puzzles—so common in the inland as well as the maritime counties of Ireland, and burying his face in his hands, give free vent to that natural sorrow which he could not but feel at sight of so much desolation. At home, the old man tried to conceal his feelings, for he knew that the wife of his youth and the children of his love were pining and wasting day by day under the blighting hand of misery, and he felt it incumbent on himself to set them an example of fortitude and resignation. One of the hardest of his trials was the apparent neglect of Bessy, for, although he tried to excuse her to the rest of the family, he was far from being satisfied himself, and feared either that something must have happened to her, or that her heart had grown hard and cold, as hearts often do in the lapse of years, especially away from home and home-ties.

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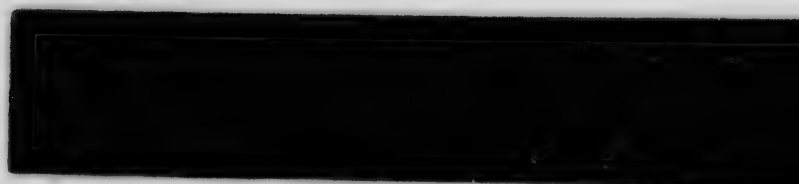
Denis had stolen out that evening, after partaking of the sorry fare which all Nancy's culinary skill was not able to make palatable. He sat down on a flat stone near a bubbling spring where his cattle used to slake their thirst at summer's fervid noon-time. The tears welled up from his heart as he looked around on the long familiar scene. The future loomed before him dark and threatening—death—in its most hideous form might be hanging over those he loved best—the danger to himself was only a secondary consideration—what was to come of them all? He looked up to heaven for hope and comfort, and lo! there was the pale silvery crescent of a bright new moon, rising through a sea of gossamer clouds.

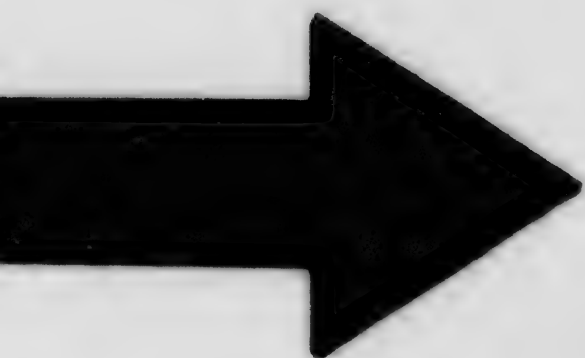
"Few are the hearts too cold to feel  
A thrill of gladness o'er them steal,  
When first the wand'ring eye,  
Sees faintly in the evening blaze,  
That glimmering curve of tender rays  
Just planted in the sky.

\* \* \*  
"The captive yields him to the dream  
Of freedom, when that virgin beam  
Comes out upon the air;  
And painfully the sick man tries  
To fix his dim and burning eyes  
On the soft promise there."

Denis Conway had never heard of these beautiful lines of the American poet, he knew not that the young crescent on which his eyes gazed delighted had been the theme of many a bard, but he felt the gentle, cheering influence of the fair heavenly sign, and opening his heart to "the soft promise there," he clasped his aged hands in a new and more hopeful spirit, and murmured: "The Lord is a rich provider—what makes me fear that me or mine will die of hunger—we've never seen ourselves yet without a bit to eat, an' amn't I ungrateful to let my heart sink so low?"

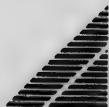
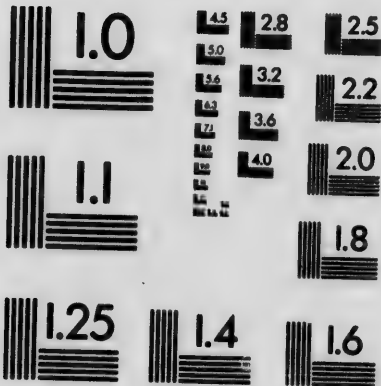
Poor Denis Conway! his trusting heart had another hard trial to undergo. A fiery crucible was even then ready to test the purity of his faith, the firmness of his fortitude.





# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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The morning sun was shining far up in heaven's blue vault, and the world looked as bright and joyous as though it contained no aching heart within its wide circumference.

Denis Conway was sitting at his door enjoying the beauty and freshness of the morning, employing himself the while in making a potato-basket of sally-twigs, a bunch of which lay beside him on the ground. For the basket, when completed, he expected to get a few pence in the village, and with that hope he worked assiduously. All at once, however, the basket fell from his hand, his pale cheek grew paler still, and a faint cry escaped him. What sight was it that had so alarmed the usually calm old man? Alas! it was no uncommon one then in Ireland. Two bailiffs, with half a dozen policemen, were advancing from the village, and Denis, mindful of Mrs. Herbert's threats, was not slow to imagine that his poor dwelling was about to be honored with their official visit. His first thought was one of thankfulness that "the boys" were gone off in search of work, and thus removed from the fearful temptation of offering resistance to the iniquitous exactions of "law and justice." His next thought was whether he should let his wife and daughters know of the impending danger, but he quickly decided not to do so. "Maybe it isn't for us they're bound at all," said he to himself, "and where's the use of frightenin' the creatures till we're sure one way or the other. If it is here they're comin' why sorrow's time enough when it comes, so, in God's name, I'll wait a little longer, anyhow."

Oh! the racking torture of that few moments' suspense as the old man sat watching the approach of the *posse comitatis*! All the love of his heart, all its unspeakable tenderness for those whom God had confided to his care, was converted at that moment into the most excruciating pain. Many a family Denis had seen turned out on the wide world, and he knew well what it was to be left without the covering of a roof, with sickness in the family, too, and no means to procure even

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a single meal. What was to become of Ellen in case his fears were verified—where were they to take her to? "God help us all this day!" sighed the wretched father, "sure it's what the fright may kill her out an' out, poor girl! for the life isn't much more than in her now. An' indeed the poor mother is low enough, too, only she doesn't wish to give in as long as she can keep on her feet. Oh! Lord, if it be pleasin' to you save them from this trial—the heaviest and sorest of all that's come yet!"

By this time the party had reached a cross-road which lay between Denis Conway's house and the village, and the old man's heart almost ceased to beat as he watched with straining eyes to see which road he would take.

"Christ and His holy mother be praised!" muttered he, "they're going the wrong way!—whisht! no, they're not—ay! it's this way they're comin'—well! I suppose I may go and tell them in the house within!—I'll wait another start, anyhow!"

On and on they came till they were but a couple of rods from where he sat, when they stopped short, and a cry of joy escaped the anxious watcher.

"Glory be to God and thanks and praise!" and he drew a long breath to relieve his overburdened heart—instantly correcting himself, however, he murmured half aloud: "Och, then, doesn't poverty and want harden creatures' hearts! God forgive me! sure I needn't rejoice—if they're not comin' here they're goin' to Peter Casey's, an' there's sickness there, more than there is with us!"

"Why, dear bless me, father! who are you talkin' to?" said Nancy coming to the door; "we thought there was somebody with you."

"No, dear, not one but myself! I'm watching the bailiffs."

"Why, are they out the day!" said the daughter greatly alarmed.

"'Deed they are, Nancy! 'deed they are—they're payin' Peter Casey a visit—God pity the poor!"



"My goodness! father, what'll they do at all, at all? an' the ould granny at death's door, and Peter himself down with the fever?"

"Listen here, Nancy!" said her father beckoning her close to him, "I'm watchin' them ever since they came in sight—I was afeard it was here they were comin'—husht! don't say anything!" and he pointed back over his shoulder.

"I know, father, I know!" whispered Nancy pale as death, "but do you think they'll come *here*?"

"God knows, dear, God knows!"

"If they do it'll kill Ellen!"

"No, it won't Nancy, no it won't—she'll live as long as God pleases, let them do their worst. Run in, agra! they'll wonder what's keepin' you. I'll stay here and watch!"

"Bessy Conway's letters—ould Denis Conway's letters!—ho! ho! ho!"

Such were the words that reached the old man's ear as Nancy left him, and turning with a start he saw a big, round, fleshy face on a level with his shoulder, and a pair of leaden grey eyes staring at him with a curious look, half wise, half foolish. It was Bid McGuigan, the woman with the least brain and the most head of any in Ardfinnan. An tóir from her birth, the light of intelligence had never dawned on Bid's mind, and her life was a blank, but not a dreary one, for Bid was blithe as a lark—blithe as life and ruddy health could make her. She had flesh and blood enough in her stunted body for two ordinary women, though her stature was that of a child. Her hair, refusing the restraint of a cap, hung down in elf-locks on either side her face, whilst behind it was cut short by the pitying care of some kindly hand. A stranger would have been startled at the apparition of such a figure so suddenly at his side. It was too familiar to his eyes to alarm Denis, but the words he heard were passing strange in the mouth of Bid McGuigan.

"What's that you're sayin', Bid?" he asked in a soothing tone.

"I don't know!—Ho! ho!—Bessy Conway's letters!—Bid was up at Georgy Brown's." Another surprise for Denis. It was Georgy Brown that kept the post-office in the village. Before the old man could put any questions, Bid clapped her hands and shouted:

"Ho! ho! here's the bailiffs comin'!" So they were at the very door.

## CHAPTER XX.

"WELL! have you the rent for us, Conway?" said the insolent bailiff who was Mrs. Herbert's *fac totum*—the other was merely an assistant.

"Deed I haven't, Alick!" said poor Denis Conway trembling all over; "I told the mistress I couldn't raise a penny till I'd get it from America—I'm expectin' a letter every day from my daughter Bessy that's in New York beyant."

"Fudge!" was Alick Bowman's emphatic reply. "You might as well give us a draft on the man in the moon. As you haven't the money, Conway! we have a duty to perform—you must march!"

"Why, sure, Mister Bowman! it isn't turn us out you'd be doin' ?—sure Mrs. Herbert wouldn't do that on an old tenant like me that's on the estate since—since the old master's time—that's Mr. Mullady, the heavens be his bead, this day!"

"Can't help it," was the man of law's curt reply. "Come, Charlie!" to his companion, "lend a hand, will you? we've got plenty of work to do before night!—it's like there's not much here to detain us."

In the bailiffs went, but Denis was in before them, trying to soothe as well as he could his wife and their daughter Nancy who were sobbing and crying and wringing their hands in a paroxysm of grief. Ellen was just sitting up for the first time, propped up in her mother's old arm-chair, and on hearing the direful news she fell back fainting, though not insensible.

She had not strength enough to make any demonstration of her feelings.

The poor father had only time to say, "don't despair, for your lives don't! the darkest hour, you know, is the hour before day, and I tell you God won't desert us though the world may!"

The words were still on his lips when the two officials were hard at work turning the poor *ménage* inside out. The beds—such as the hard times had left—chairs, tables, pots, pans, and so forth, were flying through the door-way with little regard to "loss or damage" on the part of those who trundled them out. The family within sat looking on in hopeless anguish waiting for the moment when they, in turn, were to be sent after their goods and chattels.

"Well! God sees all this," said the afflicted father of the family as he saw his wife wrapping a thin shawl round Ellen—the blankets were gone with the rest. "God sees all this!"

"What are you about, young woman?" cried Alick suddenly. A little hand had been laid on his arm, and a soft feminine voice bade him stop. "Who the d—l are you?"

The Conways answered the question. Father, mother, sisters—even Ellen—rushed forward with hands outstretched and the one word "*Bessy*!" escaped the lips of each with a thrilling cry of joy.

Bessy put them all gently aside with her hand. "Let us get the bailiff out first," said she; "oh! father, father! how did it ever come to this with you?—Ellen, darling, sit down—you're not able to stand—oh! you haven't a seat, I see—hand in a chair!" said she to the astonished bailiff.

"Can't do it," said he scratching his head, "the things are all under seizure, and they're a-going to be sold by and by."

"They're *not* going to be sold," said Bessy with quite an air of authority; "give in the chair, I say!" Mechanically the man obeyed.

"Now all the other things—put them in, I tell you?"

"I tell you I won't," said Bowman doggedly, "unless the old man is ready to hand out the cash." This by way of a taunt.

"How much is it, father?" demanded Bessy.

"Oh! indeed, it's little use to tell you, afore!"

"Well! well! let us hear it, anyhow."

"Why, I'll soon tell you, if you want so bad to hear it," said Bowman impudently, "it's twenty-three pounds, ten shillings, and seven pence halfpenny." He and his colleague looked as though they expected the young woman to be quite confounded by so startling an announcement. She was not, though, but appeared rather to enjoy it as something particularly amusing.

"Go up now to Mrs. Herbert," said she with a quiet smile, "and tell her she will oblige us by sending a receipt in full—in full, mind you!—for all rent and arrears of rent due on Denis Conway's farm."

"But what'll I say to her in regard of the money?" demanded Alick. "Of course, she's not such a fool as to give a receipt without knowin' for what?"

"I'll tell you what you'll do, father," said Bessy after a moment's thought, "I'll give *you* the money, and you can go up yourself with this man and pay Mrs. Herbert and get your receipt."

"An' have *you* that much money, Bessy?" said the father with tears in his eyes—tears of joy.

"Yes, and a trifle more to the back of it," said Bessy in her gayest tone.

Hearing this the two bailiffs took off their hats, and simultaneously declared that they didn't wish to put Mr. Conway or his family to any inconvenience. They weren't to be blamed, they were only poor men earning an honest penny, and so forth. In proof of their good dispositions, Alick ordered his *aide-de-camp* to take in the things as the decent

girl said, and "be sure you put them in their places again, Toal!"

Toal, though somewhat of the roughest and gruffest, addressed himself willingly to his task, possibly influenced by a sly little whisper from Alick as he passed him to go off with Denis.

The news of Bessy's arrival had already gone out, and a crowd of the nearest neighbors were collected in front of the door, only kept from rushing in by the imperative orders of the policemen. Denis was besieged on his way out by a multitude of eager questions, very few of which he took time to answer. He did not fail, however, to publish the fact that Bessy was paying all he owed to Mrs. Herbert, and the old place was still to be theirs. "Here's the money in my pocket," said he slapping his thigh with honest exultation; "Ay! every penny of it—thank God! we're out of their power!" He looked the policemen in the face as he passed them, and held up his head with a most independent air to the great satisfaction of his delighted friends and neighbors.

"Wisha, God be praised, Denis!" cried one, "it's you that wasn't out of the need of that relief, anyhow!"

"Thanks be to God, Denis!" said another, "you can hold up your head now like a man!"

"More luck to you, Denis! an' God speed you!" shouted a third—"be sure you tell Madam Herbert her own!"

Whilst Denis was gone it afforded much amusement to the spectators to see Toal McGreevy replacing the household effects with much care and attention. It was something altogether new, and they relished it exceedingly, in the full belief that he did it "against his grain." Bailiffs are always obnoxious to the people, and Toal was particularly so on account of his harsh, sullen disposition.

"That's it, Toal! put them pewter plates on the dresser! now the noggins! I declare you're doin' it beautifully!"

"Here's the beds, Toal! won't you make them up, agra? do now!"

"Well now, who'd think he was so handy?"

"He's takin' more pains puttin' them in than he did puttin' them out."

Toal looked savage, and shook his fist at the rustic wags, but they only laughed, and went on just the same. The policemen strove to silence them, but it was no use. There was no law against talking, anyhow, they knew *that*—and so they talked and laughed incessantly, the crowd increasing every moment, till Denis came back with his receipt in his hand, and then they all pressed up to the door after him to get a sight of Bessy. The policemen no longer opposed any resistance, their duty being at an end.

The scene that followed may be better imagined than described. Whilst Bessy and her parents and sisters were exchanging their fond and joyous greeting, their friends outside were dismissing the bailiffs and policemen with derisive cheers, and sundry expressions of mock condolence for their disappointment. This was as much, perhaps, with a view to leave those within time to give expression to their feelings as anything else. That delicacy of feeling intuitive in the Irish heart in its natural state kept the people from flocking in till the re-united family had enjoyed the bliss of their meeting for a few moments without witnesses, no matter how friendly. Furthermore, there was that love of fun, also inherent in the Irish nature, and which no circumstances can ever wholly destroy, and then such a glorious opportunity of having a laugh at the expense of their official tyrants could not possibly be let slip. The others bore the ironical merriment of the people with more good nature than might have been expected. Alick Bowman was particularly free and easy, and "humored the joke" in a way that was quite refreshing to see in a man of such high official authority. He even condescended to throw out divers "quirks and quibbles" for the amusement of the crowd as he marched away, pretty much in the same way as a bear showing off his steps to a gaping crowd at a country fair.

Meanwhile the Conways were enjoying the exquisite sense of present happiness, all the brighter for the cloud that had just passed. The mother sat in an ecstasy of joy silent and tearful, with the hand of her newly recovered daughter clasped in hers. Ellen was on the other side with her languid head resting on Bessy's shoulder, whilst Nancy sat at her sister's feet looking up in her face, scrutinizing every feature with the tenderest expression of interest. The old man planted himself on a long seat behind Nancy and the tears of joy were rolling unheeded down his furrowed cheeks.

"Now, didn't I tell you, Bridget, astore!" said he, "that Bessy would bring light to us some dark day when we most needed it?—didn't I tell you God would never desert us?"

Bridget only nodded assent—she was too happy for much talking.

"But, father dear!" said Bessy, "why didn't you let me know how things were going at home?—what came over you, at all, that you didn't write to me?"

"There now!" said Denis exultingly to the others, "you see she never got one of the letters!—we were all wrongin' poor Bessy!"

"Then you *did* write?" said Bessy in great surprise.

"Write! why to be sure we did?—didn't we know well enough that you'd ask no better use for your money than helpin' us in our sore need; oh! indeed we wrote three letters to you since the hard times came on us."

"And you got ne'er a letter from me all that time?"

"Not as much as one scroll."

"Well! I'll tell you what it is, father," said Bessy with a thoughtful look, "they couldn't all go astray."

"That's just what I think myself, Bessy!"

"Why, Lord bless me! what could come of them?" cried Nancy, "sure nobody ever steals letters? what use would they be to them?"

Bessy looked at her father and her father looked at her.



"That's what we can't tell," said Denis, "but I heard a riddle the day that'll maybe throw some light on it, when I get it read."

The curiosity excited by these words was suspended for the time by the influx of friends and neighbors, anxious to offer their felicitations to the family, and still more so to see the live lion all the way from America. The house was hardly empty that whole day, one set of visitors making their appearance, perhaps, before the others had made their exit. If Bessy had been the owner of half a dozen tongues she could hardly have answered all the questions put to her, not only about her own affairs but those of every person that had left that part of the country for more years than Bessy had been in America.

"Nancy dear!" said Bessy taking her sister aside, "I want to speak to you a moment." What passed between them was a secret, though many ears were open to hear, but whatever it was, Nancy threw a shawl around her attenuated form and vanished, after in turn whispering her mother. Up rose Bridget with alacrity, and made the best fire she could and over it hung a large pot of water, bustling her way through the sitters with an air half consequential, half good-natured.

Denis watched his wife's movements with a curious eye, and so did Ellen, too, but neither asked any questions. After a little Nancy returned with a large basket of baker's bread, whilst a boy from the village carried another containing tea, sugar, butter and meat. By that time the water was boiling, and Bessy said to her mother:

"Now you sit down, and Nancy and I will do the rest!"

"Deed an' I'll not sit down, then," said Bridget jocosely, "it's long since I had any cookery to do, an' do you think I'll let you an' Nancy have it all to yourselves, now when it is to be done?"

Bessy laughed and said, "Have your own way, then!" and tucking up the sleeves and skirt of her brown merino dress,

she went to work to assist her mother, telling Nancy to gather up all the cups and saucers and plates she could find, and set the table for supper. "I want to surprise the boys," said she, "and have something nice ready for them comin' in."

Many a hungry eye was cast on the savory smelling meat "fizzing" by the fire, and the piles of white bread which rose at either end of the table, with tempting looking butter in proportionate quantity. It was long since any one there had seen such preparations for a meal, and it was pitiful to see the greedy eyes with which they gazed on the sumptuous fare. Strict propriety would have urged a general move, but somehow the farther the preparations advanced, the less the visitors seemed inclined to leave. Fast and faster they talked, and every one appeared to ransack his or her memory for some other question to put to Bessy, some scrap of information yet to be elicited.

Denis tried to catch his daughter's eye several times, but failed, for Bessy seemed rather to avoid meeting his glance. It seemed very strange to the hospitable old man that the girls and their mother should make such a parade of their entables at a time when the whole country was starving. "I wish they had waited," said he to himself, "till the poor creatures were gone. That's always the way with these women, wanting to make a show."

The night was closing in when the word went round that the boys were coming up the breen. "Run, Bessy! run and hide!" said her father—"we'll take a rise out of them, if they haven't heard of your comin'."

This suggestion was unanimously applauded, and Bessy, having cast a glance over the table, and the cooking apparatus, to see that all was in readiness, stationed herself just within the door of the room—at the lower end of the kitchen, opposite the fireplace, where, by keeping the door ever so little open, she had a view of all that passed.

When the young men came in they could scarce believe their

eyes, and they stood looking round them like persons recovering from some strange dream. Where they expected to see only penury, and want, and woe, there was comfort and plenty and smiling faces. A bright fire burned on the hearth, the table was spread for a feast, and the place was redolent with the grateful smell of frying beef. The kitchen was full of friends and neighbors, all looking as gay as could be in anticipation of the good cheer, which they began to suspect was not all for family consumption. The young men looked at their father, then at their mother. More wonders: the wo-begone look of the morning had vanished, and hope and joy were beaming in the eyes but late so dull and heavy. There was a twinkle of sly humor, too, that brought old times vividly back, and made the brothers smile they knew not why. Even Ellen was no longer the same—the pinched, parched look was gone, and the ghastly paleness of the sweet features was tinted with a more life-like hue. Ellen was smiling, too, and smiling cheerfully and hopefully as she used to do in the days when peace and plenty were their lot. It was strange, passing strange. Every object was so changed that it seemed as if a magician's wand had waved over all.

A chorus of glad welcome greeted the bewildered brothers, but they heeded it not. Their attention was riveted on their parents.

"Father! mother! what's the meaning of this?" cried one.

"We heard as we came along," said the other, "that something had happened at home, but nobody would tell us what it was!"

"Can't you guess?" said their father pleasantly.

"Well! either Bessy's come home, or the fairies have been at work here since we left."

A shout of laughter followed and a general clapping of hands.

"You may as well come out, Bessy!" cried her mother, "these lads are too good at guessin' to be kept in the dark."

A moment more and Bessy was in the arms of the brothers so long unseen, so fondly remembered, and the tears that years of suffering and privation could not squeeze from their hearts, now gushed from their manly eyes and rolled unheeded down their cheeks. Their emotion was shared by all present. If ever there was a moment of unclouded happiness that was one. Oh! beautiful is the love that unites the sister and the brother! The human heart knows no feeling holier or more tender.

"So you came back to us, Bessy!" said her elder brother, looking at her as though he were but half sure of her identity. "Well! we had most given you up."

"How is that, Tommy?"

"Why, we thought you had got to be like the rest of the world: '*out of sight, out of mind*,' and—and—but no matter now what we thought," he added cheerfully, "I see you're the same Bessy still!"

"Bedad you're out there, Tom!" said lame Jack the fiddler with a knowing wink; "I'm thinking there's a mighty great difference."

"What's that you say, Jack," said Denis, taking the pipe out of his mouth, wiping the shank carefully, and handing it to the man of music; "what difference do you find in the little girl?"

"Little girl, inagh!" retorted Jack with his first puff of the pipe; "haith it's the droll little girl she is now!—why man alive! how could Bessy or any one else live so long in America beyant and come back the same as she went?—'pon my credit, if she did, it wouldn't say much for her sharpness. I'll go bail, that very girl," and he pointed at Bessy, "knows more now than any one in the parish—barrin' the priests, and Master Leary—come now, Bessy! what do you say yourself?—didn't you learn more since you went to America than you did in your whole life before?"

"Well! I declare I don't know, Jack!" said Bessy with a

smile. "I suppose I learned something, anyhow; experience is the best teacher, they say, and I've had a good deal of it since I saw you all before. But that's not the question now! sit over to the table all of you and have some supper—just a snack, you know!"

"To be sure, to be sure!" said her father; "sit over every one of you!"

And Denis rubbed his hands in a little ecstasy of hospitality; then taking his place at the table, renewed the invitation by an imperative gesture, which, of course, had the desired effect, every one protesting, however, that "they hadn't the least occasion;" most of them were "just after eatin' when they left the house," and indeed, to hear Bessy Conway's guests on that evening as they drew their seats to the table, you would think it was all a mistake about the famine, and that times were particularly good just then and provisions in the greatest abundance in that part of the country. Before the meal was over, the company was increased by the arrival of other friends, and, of course, room was made for them, too; the greater the crush, the more fun there was, for, as Denis jocosely observed, "the more the merrier." So a cordial welcome awaited all comers.

Of course, Bessy was the great centre of attraction, and every one was more than anxious to hear her adventures in America.

"I had no adventures," said Bessy so shortly that it took them all aback.

"Well! well! anything you seen that was new and strange."

"I hadn't much time to see sights," said Bessy again, "I was busy enough most of my time."

"Lord bless us, isn't she mighty short!" said a big woman to Jack; "wouldn't you think she'd be glad herself to tell what she had seen."

"It's plain she doesn't want to be questioned," returned Jack in a whisper, "espaycially about her own affairs. It's

my opinion there's some secret in it." He winked at the big woman and she winked at him.

"But what about Ned Finigan, Bessy?" said her father suddenly. "It's reported here that he doesn't know the end of his own riches."

"And is that all you know about it?" exclaimed Bessy, with a start, and the color faded from her cheek. "Ned *did* make some money, but I'm afraid it's little good he ever got of it. I wish to the Lord he had never left Ardsinnan?"

"Why, dear bless us! what happened him?" asked her elder brother. "What's amiss with poor Ned?"

"I'm loth to tell it," said Bessy in a husky voice. "Poor Ned!"—her voice sank to a whisper and her eyes filled with tears—"he died about a month before I left New York."

A universal chorus of lamentation followed this announcement, for Ned had been a general favorite.

"Ned Finigan dead!" said Denis Conway in a voice choking with emotion, "him that was so stout and strong! Ah, then, what did he die of, Bessy?"

"Well! it's hard to say," was the answer, and Bessy gave her father a look that made him change the subject immediately.

"And what came of Paul Brannigan?" was the next question, when it was clearly ascertained that nothing more was to be learned about Ned.

"Oh! Paul's doing first-rate—there's no fear of *him* but he'd do well. I suppose you all heard of the money he fell heir to——"

Yes, most of them had heard of the rich old lady that took a fancy to Paul, and shared all she had with him.

Bessy smiled as the image of poor Dolly Sheehan arose before her. "Well! she wasn't a lady," said she, "nor yet to say very rich, but what she had is Paul's now, for she's gone, I hope, to a better world, and left it all to him. And good right she had, for no son could be better to a mother than he

was to her. He's as comfortable now as he could wish himself, and has a nice little shoe-store of his own, and I tell you he's making money fast. God increase his store, for it's him that doesn't hide his face from the poor, anyhow! He boards with the Murphys——"

"Oh! that's true, and how are *they* doin'?"

"Well! pretty fair. Peery and the boys are very steady and they're most of the time in good work. They have some money saved, and live very nice and comfortable. I believe Ally is going to give up the business, and it's it was the unlucky business to *her*!—and go and live with the father and mother. Don't you mind what I wrote to you, father, about Mary marrying Luky Mulligan?"

"To be sure I mind it well, Bessy! but I was forgettin' to ask you how it turned out?"

All eyes and ears were open to know what came of such a match. Nothing good *could* come of it, every one said.

"Well! you're not far wrong *there*," said Bessy, "they were only a few months married when Luky went off and 'listed, and was sent away out to Mexico, I believe it was, and Mary had no other shift but going out for a day's work, on account of a poor cripple of a little girl she had that was born after the father went away. Sometimes she used to get leave to take the poor child with her to work, and there she'd be all day trying to mind it and mind her work; if she left it in the tenement house where she had part of a room it was worse still, for she'd be fretting about it all the time. So that's the way it went on until she was fairly heart-broken, with poverty, and want, and the height of wretchedness, for the pride that was in her wouldn't let her go to her own to look for help. At last, she took to drink, and her unfortunate child was burned to death one day when she was out for something at the grocery, and she didn't live long herself after it: I believe she died over on Blackwell's Island, where prisoners are sent for

stealing, or anything of that kind that doesn't entitle them to States Prison."

There was a general murmur of pity and regret on hearing this doleful tale. There was no one there that did not remember Mary Murphy, the prettiest girl about Ardfinnan, ay! and the merriest, too! Soon after the neighbors began to drop off, saddened by the fate of Ned Finigan and Mary Murphy. When the last was gone, Bessy told her father what she did not choose to tell before so many, that Ned had died a dreadful death of *delirium tremens*; that it took four men to hold him in the bed, and he fancying he saw all kinds of horrible shapes, and fairly out of his senses,

"And that's the way he died, Bessy?"

"That's the way he died!"

No prayer was breathed in response, nothing but sighs and groans.



## CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE "the Lammas floods" rolled that year over the sun-parched holms of Tipperary Denis Conway's house had assumed more than its former appearance of comfort and neatness, and when the family sat down to their Hallow-Eve supper on the last night of October the barn had grain, and the byer had cows, and a fine young colt was munching his hay through the rack of the well-covered stable, perhaps enjoying the sense of comfort as well as his owners. The big ark was packed full of new meal, and the flitches of bacon were again pendant from the snow-white rafters. There was a fire blazing on the well-swept hearth that suggested the idea of a grand pyramidal turf-stack somewhere in the immediate vicinity.

There was no other light in the kitchen but what the fire gave, but that was so bright that every object was plainly discernible, and it needed only a glance to establish the fact that everything there was "like a new pin." The antique pewter on the dresser, and the tins on the wall hard by, were reflecting the warm fire-beam like so many mirrors, and the wooden ware beneath was as white as any one had ever seen it in the best days of the Conways.

The supper was ready, and every one seemed as ready for it. Ellen, now quite recovered, was bustling around giving the last touch to the preparations, whilst Nancy and Bessy were hurrying to put the last stitch in a new stuff dress for their mother. One brother was reading aloud a passage in

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Columbkille's Prophecies for the special entertainment of his father who was listening with great attention; the other was teasing the girls "on the sly" about their skill in dress-making which Owen affected to rate very low. The mother sat looking at them all with her calm, sober smile of happiness, pondering in her mind how God had brought them out from such a sea of misery. "Well! I think it's all along of the faith that Denis had," she said within herself, "like Job, that the priest tells us about so often, that got to be better off after all his troubles than he ever was before, and all on account of his patience. That's just the way with Denis—he bore everything that came—ay! things that fretted the life and soul in *me*, and now see how the Lord sent Bessy home to us with plenty of money just when we were at the lowest! It's a wonderful thing to think of, anyhow!"

Drop, drop came down the rain on the rough stones outside the door.

"Well! sure enough," said Owen with a gay laugh, "it's a hard night for the fairies!"

"Husht! Owen, husht!" whispered his mother all in a tremor; "let *them* alone, and they'll let *you* alone!—they're the best of neighbors, but it isn't safe to be namin' them at all."

"Lord save us, what's that?" cried Ellen, stopping short in her work, and standing pale as death in a listening attitude; "what's that, at all?"

"Maybe it's the fairies," put in the incorrigible Owen. He was silenced by a warning gesture from his father, and they all held in their breath to listen.

Drop, drop on the stones still went the rain, splash, splash in the puddles, but another sound was plainly heard, a small voice muttering words, the tenor of which was lost to the ear.

"I think Owen is about right," whispered Nancy.

"It's some creature—some child, maybe, that's out in the rain," said Bessy in the same low whisper.

"I'll bet my life it's Bid McGuigan," cried Tommy aloud; "I'm sure that's her voice."

He rushed to the door, but Ellen was as quick as himself, and placed her hand on the latch. "Don't, don't till we know what it is!"

"Come away, Ellen!" said her father gently, "let him open the door. Whoever's in it, we can't leave them outside such a night as this."

The door was opened, and in stumped Bid McGuigan, as doleful an object as could well be imagined. The heavy drops were dripping from her elfin locks, and everything on her was drenched with rain, yet the placid expression of her big flabby face was no whit disturbed.

The young men laughed and Owen said: "There she is now for you—the queen of the fairies, I declare!"

The other members of the family were too much occupied with Bid's pitiful state to pay much attention to Owen's dry jokes. Many questions were put to her, as to why she was abroad at such a time and in such weather, but Bid only shook her head, and smiled and said "Bid's cold."

"It was God sent her," said Denis looking at the poor idiot with tears in his eyes, "it was God sent her, for a share of our Hol'ev'e supper. It's an honor He's doin' us, blessed be His name! so hurry and put dry clothes on her an' we'll fix her here next the fire."

The clothes changed and Bid established in the old man's arm-chair by the comfortable hearth, the table was drawn up nearer the fire and the family took their seats well-disposed to do justice to the pile of buttered potato-cake, with its *vis-à-vis* of the nicest oaten bread, not forgetting the traditional dish of "caulcannon" steaming right in front of Denis with a well of melted butter in the centre. And to be sure that was the supper that was well relished. No royal family in Europe was as happy that night as Denis Conway's, for their cup of bliss was made sweeter than nectar by the recollection of sorrow and misery past.

If Bid McGugan wasn't in clover just then nobody ever was. But Bid never gave any sign of satisfaction no matter how well she fared. There she sat in the big straw chair eating with keen relish whatever was placed before her, and watching with unmeaning eyes the faces of those around her, not a muscle moving in her own. Oftener than any other her eye wandered to Bessy, and as though some faint glimmer of an idea crossed her darkened mind in connection with her she would mutter some incoherent words. Once after looking at her a long time she said in a voice unusually loud for her:

"Purty gentleman!"

The young people all laughed at the strange, parrot-like voice and the unmeaning words.

"Whc's the purty gentleman?" asked Bessy still laughing.

"Purty thing!" said Bid again, laying her fat little hand on her chest.

"What in the world does she mean?" cried Nancy much amused.

"She means *nothing*, Nancy! nothing at all," said Denis in a tone of commiseration; "Poor Bid!"

"Bessy Conway!" murmured Bid, "Bessy Conway's letters!—ould Denis Conway's letters!"

"Well! now isn't that queer, father!" said Bessy very seriously; "see how long she has them words in her mouth, though you'd think she had no memory at all!"

"But that's true, father!" said Tommy, "you never got Master Leary to write that letter to the Lord Lieutenant about Georgy Brown——"

"It isn't to the Lord Lieutenant, Tommy, but the Postmaster-General that we're to write. I was askin' Father Ryan about that."

"Well! whichever of them it is—and I don't know why it wouldn't do as well to write to one as the other—the letter was never wrote anyhow, and I tell you it would be a mortal sin to let that fellow go without punishment."

"Now, don't you know, Tommy!" said the Father mildly, "that the fault was Mrs. Herbert's more than his? You see she tried to put him out of his situation, and make him pay up all he owed her. What could the man do? sure he couldn't see his large family of young children turned out on the street?"

"Now, father! it's a wonder you'd talk that way!" said the son so angrily that it was easy to see the object of the old man's well-meant equivocation. "You know in your heart that you'd starve and die yourself before you'd do such a thing, and what makes you try to excuse that villain? If Mrs. Herbert wanted our letters for her own bad ends, was that any reason *he'd* give them to her, an' him on his oath to take care of every letter that comes, and give it safe to the right owner?"

"Well, but, Tommy! if you're a Christian ——"

"If I'm a Christian it doesn't prevent me from seeing justice done," said Tommy, with a most determined air, "and if God spares me life and health I'll expose Georgy Brown and the Madam too"—his face was crimson with anger, and he struck the table with his clenched hand. "If the law affords us satisfaction, *we must have it*, and that's all about it."

Bessy, too, was of opinion that the treacherous postmaster should be prosecuted. "If Mrs. Herbert comes in for a share of the disgrace," said she, "I think, father, she's well deserving of it. See how she served you and Tommy when you went to ask her for the letters—if you were dogs, she couldn't treat you any worse—and then she didn't even give them to you."

"How could she give them, you foolish girl! if she burned them, or tore them up, or something that way?"

"Well, dear bless you, an' say no more about it!" said Mrs. Conway, "there's time enough for all such things, an' let them alone for *this* night. Go on with your supper, children! an' if you *want* to talk, talk of something that's pleasing!"

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"Your mother's in the right, children dear!" said the old man, "it's joyful our hearts ought to be, an' overflowin' with gratitude, when we think of the thousands an' thousands that hasn't bit or sup this night—the blessin' o' God an' my blessin' on them that brought back peace and plenty to us all!"

"The good people will have a fine place of it here the night," said Owen, "besides what they had this night twel'-month——"

"Didn't I tell you to let *them* alone?" said his mother in a tone of alarm. "Is there any use in talkin' to you, Owen?"

"Why, mother dear!" said the son half seriously, "sure I'm sayin' nothing bad of them! When I never said or did them ill, I'll go bail they'll do *me* no harm. But I wouldn't be in Mrs. Herbert's shoes the night for a new suit of clothes!"

"And why so, Owen?" asked Bessy with great earnestness.

"Oh! that's true, you were away in America when it happened. Why, you see, the ould madam couldn't let even the fairies alone, good people as they are—she must go and dig up the rath on the hill above."

"Dig up the rath?" cried Bessy in horror, "why, no! surely she wouldn't do that?"

"I tell you she *did*, and she couldn't get a man to do it only Bill Morrow and Harry Grimes—by the same token, Bill broke his arm before ever he got home the day they finished the job, and Harry Grimes found the best cow he had lyin' dead in the byer a week or two after."

"Good for them!" chimed in Nancy. "They might have known what would come of meddlin' with *them*—fair may they come, and fair may they go!"

"Well! but Mrs. Herbert that was the cause of it all," said Bessy, "how well nothing came across her! maybe the good people have a respect for the rich as well as others."

"Bessy! Bessy! take care!" said her mother anxiously, holding up her finger at the same time by way of caution.

Nothing more was said at the time about Mrs. Herbert or

her eviction of the pigmy community of the rath. The merriment which usually characterizes Hallow-eve in Irish households was that night somewhat subdued on account of the miserable state of the country, and the family after saying their usual prayers in common, retired to rest early, a comfortable shake-down being made for Bid McGuigan in the chimney corner.

Next day the whole country was thrown into a state of fearful excitement. Word went out that Mrs. Herbert had been found dead in her bed that morning, and as soon as the awful news had been fully verified, it was set down as an act of fairy vengeance. People crossed themselves and looked at each other, and shook their heads.

"She knows the difference now," said one with religious solemnity.

"I'll go bail she does," said another, "and I think she has her own death to answer for—if she had let the forth alone she might be a living woman yet, for sure there wasn't a gray hair in her head, an' she always had the best of care. Ha! ha! herself an' himself are both gone now—ay faith! where they'll have no poor tenants to harry—I'm thinkin' there's more landlords than tenants *there*."

Such were the general feelings of the people. Even Denis Conway's family, though shocked to hear of such a death, did not fail to view it as an act of retributive justice on the part of Almighty God. Why was it that Bessy alone felt a softer emotion, and actually dropped a tear for the fate of that cold, harsh woman who had never made a friend on earth, never had one to love her, unless it might be the kindred spirit who had walked the world with her through the years of her wedded life?—why should Bessy mourn her who had been the worst enemy of those she loved! Mourn she did not—that was certain—yet there was a "deep note of sadness" struck in her heart by the news of that woman's unholloved death. She saw the terrible judgments of God

coming down on the house of the wicked, but why should it grieve her? The Herberts were only beginning to reap the crop of curses and maledictions which they had been sowing ever since they became Irish landlords. What had Bessy Conway to do with that? Nothing, it is true, yet her heart was heavy, as with the undefined fear of coming evil. She tried hard to shake off this feeling, but it could not escape the keen eye of her father.

"Bessy!" said he, "what makes you look so sorrowful the day? why, I declare, one would think you were breakin' your heart about the old madam, an' I'm sure it's little reason *we* have to cry her."

"Why, indeed, father, it isn't for *her* I'm troubled—though, to be sure, it's an awful thing for any creature to be taken off so suddenly—God save every one from an ill end! I don't know what's come over me, at all, and that's the truth!"

"Well! whatever it is, Bessy! try an' get over it," said her father very seriously, "for it's very ungrateful to God to be downhearted and sorrowful when He gives us so many blessings. Another thing, I'd wish you to stir up and be cheerful, for fear of people passin' remarks on account of what was said before!"

Bessy's face was scarlet in a moment. "Father!" said she, "I never did anything to be ashamed of—at home or abroad—and I'm not afraid of any remarks that can be passed, but I'll do what *you* bid me."

"That's my own good girl," said the old man laying his hand on his daughter's head, "God blesses the obedient child."

A fortnight after Mrs. Herbert's death, Tommy Conway had the satisfaction of seeing Georgy Brown removed from the post-office in Ardfinnan, and another installed in his place. It was understood that powerful influence had been brought to bear on the authorities in the General Post-office to screen him from a prosecution which must have resulted in transportation. The truth was that Master Georgy had the questionable honor of being an Orangeman, and his case being taken



into consideration at a special meeting of Lodge No. —, it was duly resolved that Brother Brown must not be exposed to the dangerous ordeal of a public trial. It was not hard to persuade the Dublin officials that a man for whom my lord Marquis of Tumbledown and my lord Viscount Pamperton condescended to interest themselves—not to speak of other notable representatives of “the landed interest”—could not possibly be far in the wrong, and that dismissal from office was a punishment quite severe enough. Nevertheless, Georgy was smuggled off with his family—to a good farm on the Tumbledown estates, and the Conways were quite content that the villain should fall into other hands than theirs. So long as he was removed from the situation of which he had proved himself so unworthy, they had nothing more to wish in his regard.

Ivy Lodge was a drear and lonely spot after the death of its mistress. Strange noises were heard of nights in the halls and chambers, and on the staircases forms which mortal eye might not see were felt brushing past the living. Autumn’s “melancholy days” were saddening the earth, and the winds were abroad in the long dark nights, and they made a dismal howling through the lofty halls of the Lodge. The few servants left by the executors to take care of the house, having their imaginations full of gloomy fancies on account of the recent disaster, of course set every unusual sight or sound down for something supernatural. They soon got frightened out of their wits, and ran away from the house without waiting for leave or license, wages or anything else. The report spread like wildfire that the Lodge was haunted; all manner of wild stories were told in relation to it, for the inventive faculties of the whole country were at work on a theme so fruitful. Never was poor spirit seen under so many different shapes as that of the late Mrs. Wilson Herbert, nor ever sounds so dismal and so wild awoke the echoes of a haunted house. The place was utterly deserted, save by the venerable rooks who, time out of

mind, had their dwelling in the ancient woods, and the bats that flapped their leathern wings at evening's ghostly hour through the silent halls of the deserted manor-house.

Seeing the ruin that was coming on, so fine a place, people began to wonder what had come of young Herbert, or whether he was still alive. With all his faults, there was a certain feeling cherished towards him that was very different from what might be expected considering the detestation in which both his parents were held. Now that he was probably dead, many fine traits of character were remembered that before had passed unnoticed. People began to say: "Well! to give the Devil his due, Master Henry had a good turn in him after all. He was a wild harum-scarum fellow—every one knows that—but sure he done more harm to himself than to anybody else—he never harried the poor, anyhow."

"'Deed, then, he didn't, an' to tell the truth, many a one he relieved unknownst to the world. Don't you mind the time Paddy McGarry's cow was a drivin' for the county cess—well! I know for certain it was Master Henry gave him the money to go an' pay it an' get back poor crummie for the childer—they was his very words, an' sure I had it from Paddy's own lips, God be good to him! but he bid him for his life say nothing about it, for fear of it comin' to the ears of his father or mother."

"I don't doubt it a bit," would another say, "for I knew him to send Widow Fogarty a load of seed-potatoes one spring, an' him only a gossoon at the time. If it hadn't been for him, Nelly and the children would have been badly off that very season. There's no one can say but what he was a fine promisin' young gentleman if he hadn't taken up with bad company."

Some such conversation took place one evening around Denis Conway's fireside, where some five or six neighbors had dropt in on their *caillicie*. An attentive observer might have noticed that the several speakers, although very much in ear-

nest in their remarks, had a secondary motive in view, for many a stealthy glance was cast towards the corner where Bessy sat spinning flax. Bessy's countenance revealed nothing. If she *was* taking note of what passed no one was the wiser concerning her thoughts. Her eyes were fixed on the filmy thread that her delicate fingers spun so deftly, and her peachy cheek never changed its hue. Once or twice she bent over the wheel when there was no apparent reason for examining *hack* or spool, and it might be that a tear was trembling in her eye, but if so, no one saw it for Bessy's face was calm as a summer lake.

Seeing this, the visitors were taken quite aback, but some were unwilling "to give it up so," and thought a change of tactics might perhaps effect their object.

"But that's true, Bessy! weren't you and Master Henry out to America together?"

"We were in the same ship," Bessy answered without raising her eyes.

"An' of coorse you know all about him after he got there."

"Of course I do not," said Bessy with a very quiet smile; "surely you don't suppose I was watching *him* all the time? Tommy"—to her eldest brother—"I thought you were going over to the dyer's to-night with that wool."

To be sure Tommy was going, and Owen with Tommy, and their going was the signal for a general move. Before the visitors retired, however, one of them, an ancient dame who was the mother of a large family of grown-up daughters, took occasion to ask Bessy would she advise any of *her* girls to go out to America. "There's Jenny and Peggy," said she, "an' they have a great notion of startin' next spring."

"Well! I'm not over fond of giving advice," said Bessy, "but as you asked my opinion I'll give it, and then you can't blame me one way or the other. America is a bad place for young girls to go to, unless they have their father, or brothers, or somebody to look after them."

"Humph! who had you to look after you?"

"Not one but myself and God's good Providence."

"Well! an' wouldn't our girls have the same?" asked the dame sharply.

"I'm not speaking of *them*, at all," said Bessy, "but I tell you, Mrs. O'Hare, there's many a girl that had as good a mother as ever you were—and I'm not saying but you're good enough—that leaves home a simple country girl with the fear of God in her heart, and the blush of modesty on her cheek, that turns out very bad and very indifferent in America. If they keep in the state of grace, and go regularly to their duty they're all right, and sure, thanks be to God! there's thousands of them that do, and signs on *them* and their friends at home—but there's just as many—perhaps more—that falls in with Protestants and Jews, and everything that way, and in the course of a little time forget themselves altogether—at least they forget that they have a soul to be saved, or a God to judge them. Dress and finery, and balls and dances is all the God they have *then*, and you may guess its not a good end they make of it either for body or soul."

"Well, now, that's curious," put in another neighbor, "an' we hearin' such a different account of it from every one else. Why, there's Jemmy McBride's daughter from beyant the river that got a great match in New York or Philadelphia or some of them places—they say she doesn't know the end of her own riches."

Bessy laughed in her own quiet way. "God help your wit, Mrs. Shanaghan! it's little you know here about those great matches. Now I happen to know something about Ann McBride, for though I never saw her in America, I know them that did, and lived with her, too; she *is* married to a man in New York that's pretty well off—I think he's in the grocery business—she lives in a fine house and has very nice furniture and all that, and dresses in the very height of the fashion, but

her husband is a Protestant—a sort of a one—and poor Ann is—nothing at all. Himself goes to church of an odd time, but Ann never troubles church or chapel. I was told by a girl that lived with her that when she caught her one night teaching her children their prayers—Catholic prayers, of course—she was very angry, and told her not to be ‘bothering their brains with them old prayers, they’d have time enough to learn *them*.’ ”

Various exclamations of horror and indignation testified the feelings of the listeners. Some of them, however, were a little skeptical on the subject.

“Why, then, Bessy! it’s hard to think that girls brought up Catholics could ever come to that!”

“Well! hard or easy, I tell you it’s true,” said Bessy. “There’s thousands of Irish girls in New York (of course that’s the city I know best) that are as good Catholics as any of their people at home, but there’s just as many the other way. What would you think of an Irish girl that would tell you she was seven years in America, and had never been to Communion in all that time—maybe once or twice to confession?”

“Lord save us, Bessy!” her mother exclaimed, “you’re enough to frighten one!”

“I know that, mother, but I’m only telling the truth, and God knows! my heart bleeds to tell it. I knew girls myself that were just as I say, some of them that would laugh at you if you spoke to them of saying their prayers morning or night, and would never think of crossing a Church door if somebody didn’t make them go. That all comes, as I told you, of their going out alone to America, without any one to advise or direct them, and them falling into bad places at the very first. Take my advice, Mrs. O’Hare, and keep your girls at home—if *you* can live here, so can they, and you’ll find it better in the long run.”

"Well! I believe you're about right, Bessy!" replied Mrs. O'Hare; "it's best keep them under our own eyes. Good night, and God be with you all." The visitors then retired, wondering much at what they had heard.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE green fields of Erin were covered with their spring carpet dotted over with white daisies and yellow buttercups, the pale primrose—flower of sweetest memories!—was peeping forth on every sunny bank; the modest violet gave its faint perfume to the air, and the graceful blue-bell waved its fairy petals in the gentle breeze; the earth was balmy with the breath of opening flowers, and the trees were donning their summer foliage through the sunny showers of April.

Denis Conway and his sons were hard at work all day—and every day of the six allotted for labor—putting in their crops, wheat, oats, and early potatoes. The whole household was astir from morn till dewy eve, each one employed in their own sphere of usefulness. Nancy and Ellen were assisting out-of-doors whilst Bessy and her mother attended to the business of the house and the dairy.

One evening when the boys came in from work they mentioned as something very strange that there was smoke rising from one of the chimneys of The Lodge.

"Maybe there's some care-takers put in," said Bessy, "to keep the place from going to ruin."

"Why, to be sure," said her father, "now I come to think of it; I heard the other day that old Darby Dolan and his wife were back again in the big house."

"My goodness! it's a wonder they'd go back," said Mrs. Conway, "after them leavin' it in a fright like all the rest of

the servants. But I suppose they're gettin' a great ransom for doin' it, an' sure if anybody could or would live in the house it ought to be them on account of the long time they were in it."

"Well! long or short," said Tommy, "if I was in their place I'd have nothing to do with the house or them that's stationed in it—if I got my life out of it once, you wouldn't catch me inside the walls again."

"That's my notion, too," said Owen; "I'm sure people that seen so much of the Herberts while they were livin' ought to know better than go next or nigh them when they're dead."

"Let the dead lie!" said their father solemnly, and there the matter ended.

It made little impression on Bessy's mind, for the rumors afloat concerning the Lodge were simply amusing to her, and she saw nothing strange in the old couple going back to take charge of a house where they had spent so many years of their lives.

Ellen and she had to go that evening to a woman in the village who was spinning some wool for their mother, and on their return they had to pass quite near the gate of Ivy Lodge. The moon was just rising over the old manor, and its antique chimneys and sharp angles were clearly traced on the deep blue sky beyond. The rooks were cawing in the old woods, and the screech-owl's voice was heard at intervals making up a discordant concert, softened at times by the distant bark of some trusty watch-dog breaking faintly, yet cheerily, on the ear. The trees that shaded the avenue were filled with the softest music as the gentle night breeze stirred their dewy leaves, and the moonbeams trembled amid their branches as they fell on the road and the green bank at either side, in a net-work of silvery lustre. It was one of those nights when the heart whispers

"None but the loving, and the lov'd  
Should be awake at this sweet hour,"



and the sisters were not without feeling the charm that hung around the lonely spot.

"Well! isn't it curious, Bessy?" whispered Ellen as they approached the gate; "I'm not a bit afraid—are you?"

"No, indeed," said Bessy in her usual tone of voice; "so far from being afraid, I could find in my heart to sit all night under one of them old trees, with the wind rustling in the branches, and the moonlight dancing on that stream. One could fancy the fairies whisking about on the soft green grass."

"Bessy Conway! it's all your own!" said a voice from within the grounds—a strange sepulchral voice it seemed, too—where it came from the girls did not wait to see, for with an exclamation of terror they ran off, as fast as their limbs could carry them.

On reaching their home it was some time before either of the sisters could tell what happened. Seeing them rush in pale as death and gasping for breath, the others were almost as frightened as themselves, and more questions were asked than they could possibly have answered.

"In the name of God, girls! what did you see?" asked their father after standing some moments silent, waiting for them to speak.

"Nothing at all, father!" said Bessy, still panting, "we saw nothing—we only *heard*."

"Lord bless us! and what did you hear?" cried the mother eagerly.

The girls looked at each other. They hesitated to tell, having each a misgiving that it was a warning of some kind. But the more unwilling they seemed to speak, the more anxious the others were to hear. At last Ellen told what they had heard. Her mother clapped her hands and cried out "God save my child!" The father said nothing, but shook his head, whilst the young people tried to put it off with a laugh, seeing how frightened the others were.

"I hope that'll be a warnin' to you, girls!" said Owen with a forced laugh; "if it keeps you in after dark, it'll do you a good turn."

"I'm thinkin' it was some one playin' a trick on you, Bessy!" said the elder brother.

"Well! whatever it was," said Bessy in a subdued tone, "I'd rather hear no more about it."

There was something in her look and in her voice that silenced them all, and the subject was dropped for that time.

Not many days after, an unexpected visitor made his appearance, no less a person than Billy Potts. He had heard of the fright which the girls had got up at the Lodge, and, of course, like all other wonderful stories, it had gained considerably in passing from mouth to mouth, so much so, indeed, that the original narrators would not have recognized their own simple adventure in the well-garnished tale which the public had made up piece by piece. Anything relating to the dead, even by implication, was sure to command Billy's attention, and he had the faculty of scenting out ghostly appearances as a pointer does his game. So Billy pricked up his ears when he heard of the Conway girls' adventure, and at his first leisure hour off he started to their cottage to investigate the matter for himself.

"Humph!" said he when he had heard all, "that wasn't much to make such a rout about. To hear people talk, one would think you had seen something past the common. Could I speak a word with you, Bessy? Don't be afeard, ma'am!" he said nodding at Mrs. Conway with a goblin smile; "if your daughter never discoorsed with younger or handsomer than Billy Potts she wouldn't be haunted now as she is!"

So the two walked on down the lane together, and by the time they reached the end of it, they had grown quite confidential, and when they parted at the road, it was with an understanding that they were to meet again in the same place coming on the evening.

Her mother and sisters were very much puzzled to know what was going on between Bessy and Humpy Billy. "If he hadn't a wife and children now," said Nancy with a merry laugh, "we'd be suspectin' something, but as it is I don't know what to make of it. Tell the truth, now, isn't it something about the ghosts?—sure every one knows that Billy's a kind of a ghost himself."

Bessy put it off with a laugh, but the color rose to her cheek when she found her mother's eye fixed on her with a keen and searching look. Neither spoke, however, and the girls hurried away to resume the work which Billy's entrance had interrupted.

When the cows were milked that evening, and the milk strained up, Bessy tied a handkerchief over her head, and, throwing a light shawl round her shoulders, strolled down the breen little affected by the raillery of her sisters and brothers—the latter having been put in possession of the joke as soon as they entered the house.

"If I was you, Bessy," said Owen, "I'd have nothing to say to Billy Potts—sure the whole parish knows what he is."

"Will you not be botherin' me now, Owen?" she replied with a good-humored smile; "do you think Billy has dealings with the fairies that he'd make sale of me to them? Never fear but I'm wide awake—I have travelled too far to be asleep on my feet. The only thing I ask of you all is that you'll not be watching to see where I go to."

She was gone before any one could speak again. She knew her wish was law to the whole family, and that no one in the house would follow her to the door after what she had said.

At the cross roads below she found Billy in punctual attendance, and on the two walked side by side, taking the way to St. Finian's Church. "It's curious," said she, "what a notion I have got in my head about seeing the old Church ever since Paul told that story. Long as I lived about Ardfinnan before I never cared to go next or near it."

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"Well! I wish you had been with Paul and me the night we were in it," said Billy, "and I think you'd have no great wish to see it again. Now, all them vagabonds are gone to their account except Master Henry Herbert—an' he may be dead, too, for all I know—I declare to you, Bessy! I'd be a little daunted myself to go in now after dusk—they were the devil's own boys, them, I tell you that!—an' Herbert was the worst of them all. I wonder if that fellow will die in his bed?"

"Hush, Billy!" said Bessy in a tremulous whisper, "don't disturb the dead speaking so loud!" They had now reached the Abbey, and stood together in the shade of a ruined buttress in the south wall. "I couldn't bear to hear a loud word spoken now," went on Bessy in the same tone. "Silence reigned here when the holy monks were alive; surely there should be no noise or disturbance now when they're in their quiet graves. But where are them bones Paul was speaking of?"

"Inside there," pointing with his finger, "in the place where the altar used to be. If you want to see them you'd best come in before it gets any later, or maybe you wouldn't be thankful to yourself for goin' in at all."

"Well! to tell you the truth," whispered Bessy again, "I wouldn't be here now—though it's not but I want to see the place—only that Father Ryan told me to be sure and come one of these days. He says it's a profitable thing to visit such places now and then."

"Come, then, step in—while it's light! Ho! ho! I see you're not such a soldier as I took you for!" He had caught a certain motion of Bessy's hand which he knew was the sign of the cross. Bessy smiled faintly and they entered the building.

The place was not dark, for the evening sun was shining in through many a rent in the mouldering walls, gilding the old gray stones and the mural tablets recording names long since forgotten, and flinging irregular strips of light and beauty

over the long, dank grass and the broken columns and shattered remains of arch and corbel.

"Blessed Mother, who is that?" exclaimed Bessy in a voice of terror, catching hold of Billy's arm. "Look there! look there!"

Following the direction of her eyes, Billy observed the figure of a man kneeling in front of the ghastly pile which his hands had reared. It was a thin, attenuated form bowed with weakness or with sorrow—perhaps both—and the face, seen in profile, was sharp, and pale, and woe-worn—very unlike one well remembered, yet Bessy trembled as she looked, and Billy muttered half aloud: "If it's not himself it's his ghost, or an evil spirit. You'd best come away, Bessy, it's nothing good, you may be sure!"

He tried to draw her away, but she would not. "Let it be as it may," said she, "I'll see it out before I go. Hush! he hears us!"

It was not so, but the figure slowly arose and moved to another side of the choir, then knelt again with his back towards them. They retreated farther into the shade and Bessy whispered in a tone of horror: "It's his ghost, Billy! it's his ghost—who knows but that's his punishment, forever going round and round them bones!"

"Hut, tut, you foolish girl!" said Billy in the same low whisper, "sure you couldn't see a ghost before sun-down!"

Again the figure rose and moved to another point, then knelt as before, and Bessy saw a crucifix between the clasped hands. This made her heart beat quicker, but when, watching the face intently, she saw the color come and go, and finally saw the hand raised to wipe away a falling tear, she lost all control of her feelings, and cried out in thrilling accents:

"Oh, Herbert! Henry Herbert! is it you that's in it? if the breath of life is in you speak to me, for God's sake!"

A voice came from the lips, but the figure remained motion-

less. "It is Herbert—all that is left of him—wait! I cannot speak now!"

"Dear Lord! what does this mean?" cried Bessy, clasping her hands convulsively.

"Humph!" said Billy with great composure, "I thought there was flesh and blood in that ghost up at the house. But, faith! it's mad he is, or it isn't there he'd be at such trade as that! If you take my advice, Bessy Conway! you'll make off as fast as you can—no one can say what fit he'll take next."

"That is not the face of a madman," said Bessy still trembling, "see how fervently he prays. Oh! if God has touched his heart!"

"Touch the devil—begging your pardon!" said Billy profanely, "it's a trick he's playing, and nothing else—maybe to win a bet."

By this time Herbert had finished what might be called his station, and putting the crucifix in his pocket came forward to the place where Bessy stood awaiting him. His first impulse was to reach out both his hands, but instantly withdrawing them again, he said mournfully:

"No! no! I dare not! I am still unworthy!"

"Mr. Herbert!" said Bessy in a voice hardly audible, "what has come over you at all? what am I to think of what I see,—or am I dreaming or what?"

"No, Bessy! you are not dreaming," Herbert replied, with a strong effort to control his emotion. "You see before you one who has outraged heaven by his wickedness—one who has compromised you in pursuit of his own selfish gratification—one who has, in short, fulfilled no duty, restrained no passion."

"Mr. Herbert! Mr. Herbert!" cried Bessy, holding up both her hands in horror, "for God's sake, say no more! You never could have been so bad as that!"

"Bad!" he repeated, shaking his head with a desponding air. "bad! you know not—could not know *how* bad I was!"

"Faith! you were bad enough, Master Henry!" put in Billy with his stony smile; "to *my* knowledge, there wasn't an ill turn done about Ardfinnan but you were hand and foot in it ever since a yard of cloth made you a coat."

"That's right, Billy! that's right! heap it on and spare not," said Herbert mildly, "you can say nothing worse than I deserve."

This touched the old man's heart, hard as it seemed to be, and the tears actually started in his eyes as he exclaimed in a glow of feeling: "I'll never say an ill word of you again, then, Master Henry! never while breath's in my body!—there was good to be said of you the worst day ever you were, and, by the laws! the bad is all gone now, however it happens."

Bessy still stood in wordless anxiety looking up in Herbert's altered face. Suddenly he raised his eyes and ventured to meet her gaze for the first time. "Bessy!" said he, his pale cheek flushing like a young maiden's, "Bessy! I have been guilty before God and the world, but not before you—I have never injured you in thought, in word, or in deed—I have loved you, God only knows how well,—you have been my star of hope—my rock of safety amidst the raging billows of this sinful world—it may be that you have prayed for me—in *charity*"—he said with emphasis—"if so—if at any time you have invoked the God of mercy on my behalf, and Mary the refuge of sinners, you will now rejoice even as the angels of heaven do—in a sinner's conversion!"

The tears gushed from Bessy's eyes, and drawing a step nearer she laid her hand on his arm. "Are you in earnest, Mr. Herbert!—may I indeed hope——"

"Hope everything, Bessy!" he replied, his voice unconsciously assuming that softened tone in which he was wont to address her. "Like the prodigal of old I have returned from the desert of sin to my Father's house, and have found true peace within the one fold, where alone man can expiate sin and wash his soul white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Mr. Herbert! Henry Herbert! you don't mean to say that you are a Catholic?" cried Bessy in utter amazement.

"If I were anything else," he replied with a sad smile, "would you find me undergoing a penance like that?" And he pointed back to the scene of his former sacrilege. "This is the ninth day that I have done what you saw me do but now, and that painful task I imposed on myself as an atonement for the sacrilegious outrage of which these consecrated walls and those venerated relics were the witnesses and the objects! If you still doubt me, ask Father Ryan—he can tell you all—much more than I have told you yet."

"I will ask no one—I believe all you say!" said Bessy, her voice broken with sobs, "but how—when—where did this blessed change take place?"

"That's jist what I want to hear," put in Billy. "Whoever did it, it was a great job entirely!"

Without heeding the sexton, Herbert sat down on a broken column that lay near and invited Bessy to follow his example, adding with a faint smile: "I am not the man I was, Bessy!—God knows if I ever *shall* be!"

"Oh! Mr. Herbert, don't speak that way!" said Bessy with a gush of feeling that brought the tears to her eyes, "you'll be soon as well as ever, please God!"

Herbert shook his head despondingly and sat a few moments silent with his eyes cast down, then raising them suddenly he turned them on Bessy, and seeing the tears which she sought not to hide, he smiled with something like his former gaiety and went on:

"You ask me when and how I became a Catholic. I will go back a little in order to answer your question in a satisfactory manner. You must have heard that I was not in New York when you left for Ireland. I had gone with Dixon to Baltimore on what he called 'a speculation,' that is to say, a gambling expedition, my excellent friend having reason to believe that his line of business was brisker there than



in the Empire City. During three months that we spent there and in Charleston, Dixon managed to fleece a good many, and although the agreement between us at starting was a fair division of the profits, when it came to the point and I insisted on having my share, he flatly refused, alleging that the money staked was all his, a most flagrant falsehood that was, too! for the fellow had not five dollars in the world when we set out for Baltimore. I was very angry, as you may believe, and returned alone to New York vowing vengeance against Dixon and the whole fraternity of black-legs. My funds were almost exhausted at the time, and altogether I felt as wretched as man could be. Even the comfort of seeing you was denied me for I did not dare to appear before you after all that you had seen and heard. I was a couple of weeks in the city before I heard of your departure, and when I did hear it the furies seemed to take possession of me. The last link was broken that bound me to virtue and I resolved—God in heaven forgive me! to cast myself headlong into the whirlpool of vice, and perish soul and body."

"Lord save us!" ejaculated Bessy with a shudder. "What evil spirit got into you, at all?"

"Faith," said Billy, "there was plenty of them in him before without any goin' in then."

"Would you wish to know?" said Herbert pointedly, fixing his eyes on Bessy's face. "Shall I tell you the whole truth? For me, I care not who knows it. I thought—now do not be angry with me, for you know too it was all but a dream!—I thought it would grieve one heart which I would have given my life to win—I thought—forgive me, Bessy! that in devoting myself to destruction, I was planting a poisoned arrow in the heart that had so coldly cast me off—I thought—I believed—oh, Bessy! I thought everything that was bad and wicked—I was abandoned by God and by you who had been my tutelary angel—what wonder that I became utterly reckless and ripe for all wickedness. But heaven ordained that I was not to

sink any lower in the slough of guilt. I was attacked late one night in a dark street by three of my late companions, of whom Dixon was one, and stabbed in several places. They would doubtless have despatched me—I am sure that was their intention—for my incautious threats had alarmed them for their own safety—but as God's mercy would have it, some men passing along the adjacent street, hearing my cries, hurried to the spot, and the villains took flight immediately in an opposite direction. My deliverers finding me all but dead conveyed me at once to St. Vincent's Hospital, which happened to be the nearest, and consigned me to the care of the excellent Sisters who have charge of that institution——"

"Blessed be the Lord!" murmured Bessy, half unconsciously.

"You may guess what my feelings were," pursued Herbert, "when, on recovering my senses, I saw Paul Brannigan and his friend Mike Milligan beside my bed, whilst two of the Sisters were waiting on the doctor who was dressing my wounds. 'Thank God!' said the hunchback fervently when I opened my eyes, 'thank God! there is still a chance for his poor soul!' I never forgot those words, nor the thrilling fervor with which they were spoken, and, like a flash of lightning, the fear of God's judgments darted through my soul. I felt that my deliverers were before me, and, although the doctor forbid me to speak, I held out my hand to one, then the other, and endeavored to look the gratitude that I could not utter in words. This was the beginning of my conversion. I was filled with admiration for the wonderful ways of God, seeing that this poor man whom I had so long regarded as my bitterest enemy should become the instrument of my salvation, and prove in the end my best and truest friend. And such he truly was, for, during the six long weeks that I lay in my hospital-bed, Paul never failed to visit me every day, and I soon began to look as anxiously for his queer, old-fashioned face as I ever did for anything. The stumping sound of his

heavy foot was music to my ear, for I was sick and confined to my bed, and he was my only visitor. Yes! Paul was the good Samaritan who poured oil into my wounds and balm into my heart. He spoke to me of the eternal truths—of death, judgment, heaven and hell, and I marvelled at the eloquent words which fell from his lips under the strong inspiration of faith and charity. He pointed to the meek-looking Sisters as they moved through the wards ministering to the sick, and asked me to tell him, if I could, why it was only within the Catholic Church that such sublime charity was found. Why it was that she alone taught her children to give up all things for the love of God, and follow His divine Son in voluntary poverty and mortification. In the lull of my stormy passions the voice of reason made itself heard in reply; I recognized the truth, and my heart and soul bowed down before the majesty of religion. Hearing of my dispositions from Paul, the Sisters joined their pious exhortations to the instruction I had already received, and, by the time I became convalescent, I had made up my mind to seek salvation in that Church where alone it is to be found."

"Thank God!" murmured Bessy with intense feeling.

"By the hole o' my coat! he's stark staring mad!" cried Billy. "What wits he had are gone entirely!"

Herbert looked at him with a smile, then went on: "Leaving the Hospital, I paid the Sisters for their trouble to the fullest extent of my means—barely reserving enough to take me home to Ireland—they would have been content with much less than I gave them, but, as I said, no money could pay the debt I owed them, and any remuneration I could offer was far short of what I would wish to give.

"Before I left New York I was received into the Church by our old friend, Father Daly. He was just on the eve of starting for the Far West in company with some other zealous missionaries devoted like himself to the evangelization of the heathen tribes scattered over those vast regions. I shall

never forget the expression of his mild, intellectual face as he blessed me and told me to persevere even to the end in the path on which I had now entered—the path that leads to the new Jerusalem. ‘We may never meet again on earth,’ said he, raising his soft dark eyes to heaven, ‘but yonder is our home!’—and he pointed upwards to the azure vault where the first star of evening was just peeping through the clear ether—‘let us only pursue the straight and narrow way that leads through the wilderness of this life to the golden gates of heaven, and we shall all meet around the throne of Him who is, and was, and has been—the Lamb for sinners slain! There I hope to see you again, my dear son in Christ! and rejoice with you and all I love on earth throughout the endless ages of eternity.’ Oh! Bessy, his words made my heart thrill, and I felt at the moment as if I, too, unworthy as I am, could have given my life for the extension of God’s kingdom.”

Bessy raised her hands and eyes in wonder. “Well, surely Mr. Herbert! strange things *do* come to pass!—only I know it’s you that’s in it, I could hardly believe my ears! But how long is it since you came home?”

“Just one month. You may guess what my feelings were when I found my mother dead and gone. It had been one of my sweetest hopes to soften her heart by my dutiful care and attention, and expiate my misconduct in her regard by cheerful and willing obedience to her wishes. I thought to make a Christian of her by showing her what a change religion had made in me, but retributive justice had taken her hence before I could ask her blessing or do aught to expiate my past offences—and then the harrowing reflection that she had, in all probability, died as she lived, without a thought of God or that eternity in which she was so suddenly engulfed without a moment’s preparation. My father, too,—oh God! how I grieved for the years that were past—the misspent years for which all of us would have to answer. I would have given

worlds were they mine to have my parents still alive were it only to ask their forgiveness and tell them how sorry I was for my past disobedience. Too late! too late! all resolved itself into that one sad thought, and I was utterly wretched. I found myself possessed of wealth and houses and lands, but I saw the old homestead lone and desolate, and I missed *them*, cold and hard and unloving as they were. My first consolation was found in a visit to your good old pastor, Father Ryan, whose paternal kindness soothed my tortured heart as his counsels directed me in the right path. I felt that I had found a friend, wise and prudent and deeply interested in my welfare, temporal and spiritual. That was one point gained. By his advice I paid a visit to the Abbey, the scene of my sacrilegious folly, and there, amongst the mouldering relics of mortality, meditated on the end of man. Sitting on yonder tomb, I asked myself how it happened that I alone was spared of all who had desecrated the house of God by unhallowed revelry. Father, mother, companions, all were gone—why was I left?—why was I shown the way of truth when they all lived and died in the darkness of error?—why was not I, too, cut off in my sins? Filled with gratitude that God had dealt so mercifully with me, I so unworthy of His least favor, I humbled myself before His awful majesty, and inflicted on myself for nine successive days, by way of expiation, the penance which you have seen me undergo. I have now told you all, except——”

“Frightening Ellen and me that night up at the house,” said Bessy quickly, “I’m afraid you have that to answer for, as well as the rest!”

“I’ll be sworn he has!” cried Billy chuckling gleefully; “I was just thinkin’ when I heard of it that if my gentleman was above ground it was him was in it. Oh! faith yes, I knew it bravely.”

“Well!” said Bessy drawing a long breath, “it’s so like a

dream that I can hardly believe it yet. Tell me, Mr. Herbert! how did Paul happen to be on the street the night you were attacked, himself and Mike?"

"Oh! true, I forgot to tell you that,—they were going to Mrs. Murphy's wake."

"Mrs. Murphy's wake! is poor Bridget dead, then?"

"So it appears, but the rest of the family are doing very well—the father and sons have a contract on some railroad about the city, and Mrs. Finigan lives with them. She has her own money in bank, and is taking nothing from it,—Paul told me that when Peery and the boys have something more by them, they will all come home, perhaps for good."

"And what about Paul himself? I'd be ever so glad to see him here!"

"Paul has no notion of coming—he is doing a nice little business, and is so taken up with his Sunday School class in St. James' Church, and various other works of charity in which he is engaged, that he is content to forego the pleasure of seeing the Old Land again. He bade me tell you this, and also that he never forgets to pray for you, as he hopes you do for him. Another message he sent, but I will reserve that for another opportunity. The dew is falling now, and I think we had better retrace our steps homeward."

As the three walked on together down the road, Billy skipped along like a lamplighter, his spindle shanks hopping over the ground as lightly as though they propelled a grasshopper. He was in a great hurry home, was Billy, if true to himself, whereas Herbert and Bessy lagged lazily behind. Still they managed to keep Billy in sight, and the little man very prudently moderated his pace at times so as to remain within earshot. It was strange that Bessy did not seem the least afraid of being seen in Herbert's company, but walked on side by side with him as composedly as though his character had always been above suspicion. She had all at once

acquired an easy confidence of manner and a perfect self-possession that were very remarkable in one so modest and retiring. It seemed as if by anticipation she felt herself mistress of Ivy Lodge, looked up to by all the country round, and scattering blessings on every side. Now that Herbert was converted from his evil ways, she cared not who saw them together, for in her heart she was proud of his affection. And well she might, for with his fortune and personal advantages there were few ladies in the country that would not have been flattered by those attentions so long and so devotedly bestowed on her.

"Bessy!" said Herbert after they had walked a little way in silence, "Bessy! what have I to hope for now?—will *you* trust me?"

She raised her eyes and looked him in the face one moment steadily. It was enough. The soul that beamed on her through those clear hazel eyes was all that she could desire.

"I *will* trust you, Mr. Herbert!" she replied.

"Even to become my wife?"

"Even to become your wife!"

Herbert took the hand which she held out to him, and pressed it to his lips in silence. The color came and went on his cheek like clouds over an April sky, and his eyes filled with tears as he turned them on Bessy.

"This moment repays me for all," he said in a voice quivering with emotion; "may Heaven grant me grace to make you as happy as you deserve to be all your life long!"

The round full moon was rising over the valley of the Suir and gilding St. Finian's ruined pile and the ancient Castle of Ardfinnan when Henry Herbert and Bessy Conway appeared before the astonished parents of the latter, Billy Potts bidding them "good night" at the door. Hearing how the matter stood, the old people were, of course, very willing to give their consent that their daughter should become the wedded

wife of their handsome young landlord, and before Herbert left the house the day of days was appointed. Just two weeks from that evening, Father Daly blessed their union, and Bessy Conway left her humble home for the elegant dwelling of the Herberts.

That was the making of the Conways, as the neighbors used to say. Denis Conway's farm was secured by lease to the family for "nin ty-nine years" at a nominal rent. One of the young men was made steward up at the Lodge, and the other remained at home to assist their father. Nancy was well married a few months after Bessy, to a "gentleman farmer" in the vicinity, who would not have looked at her before. Bessy and her husband would fain have the old couple go and live with them but this they would never consent to do. A grand house like that wouldn't answer them at all, they said, and they were sure they'd never find themselves at home in it. So the old man and the old woman jogged along in their own lowly path just the same as if Bessy were Bessy Conway still and they tenants at will as in former times. Ellen, of course, remained at home to assist her mother in keeping house.

As for Henry Herbert, he was in all respects an altered man. He had sown his wild oats, as the people said, and his real character was matured under the saving influence of religion. His accession to the estate was a blessing to the tenantry, for now that the impulses of his generous nature were regulated by prudence and good sense, he became an example to the surrounding gentry, and was generally acknowledged to be one of the best landlords in the county Tipperary. And Bessy was the happiest of wives, as she said herself to Mrs. Walters when that lady and her worthy husband came to spend some weeks at the Lodge the summer after Bessy's marriage.

Captain Walters was at first a little shy of Herbert on account



of what had passed between them in Mrs. Hibbard's house in New York, but Herbert's frank cordiality speedily reassured him. When they pledged each other after dinner in champagne that sparkled like the cataract's foam, Herbert extended his hand to the Captain and said: "No welcomer guests ever crossed the threshold of Ivy Lodge than you and Mrs. Walters. Think no more of what passed—in treating me as you did, it was Bessy's welfare you studied, and the guardians of her honor and fair name are entitled to my lasting gratitude."

There was no mistaking his sincerity, and the Captain was thenceforward quite at his ease in their future intercourse. So pleased, indeed, was he with his new friend, and the other acquaintances made during this visit, that he willingly acceded to his wife's request that he should buy a property then to be sold in the neighborhood and settle there for life.

Ivy Lodge was soon as famous for hospitality as it had before been for griping parsimony. The neighboring poor were well acquainted with its precincts, and were always sure of having their bag replenished "at the big house." Bid McGuigan was a frequent visitor there, and many a time the young mistress of the mansion entertained her visitors with an account of Bid's curt description of "the purty gentleman," and the ruby that sparkled in his scarf-pin. In the long years of happiness that glided by so smoothly, the famine and all the dreary past seemed like a troubled dream, only remembered in blissful contrast with the present, and as a motive for more fervent gratitude to the Giver of all good.

THE END.

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
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